
EXCERPTA E DISSERTATIONIBUS IN SACRA THEOLOGIA

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ANDREW SOANE

Frank Sheed and his world

Popular Apologetics in Twentieth
Century England

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Popular Apologetics in Twentieth Century England

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2015

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Presentation

Resumen: Este trabajo examina la obra de Frank Sheed, editor, escritor y orador de la causa católica. Comienza con una introducción a la apologética, seguido por una exposición del contexto histórico y religioso en los últimos tiempos de la Inglaterra victoriana. Luego, investiga el aumento de la apologética popular así como el inicio de hablar en público organizado por católicos. A continuación, se describe la historia del *Catholic Evidence Guild*. Frank Sheed fue el líder del *Guild*. También fue el editor que más se asocia con la restauración intelectual y literaria católica en Inglaterra; la historia de la casa editorial *Sheed & Ward* se describe y se sitúa en su contexto. Sheed escribió varias obras apologéticas. Su metodología apologética se describe con ejemplos, y evaluaciones. Esta tesis evalúa la importancia de Sheed en la apologética inglesa. Asimismo, se buscan razones para la eventual disminución del *Guild* y de la apologética popular.

Palabras clave: Apologética, Catholic Evidence Guild, Frank Sheed

Abstract: This thesis examines the work of Frank Sheed, publisher, writer and lecturer in the Catholic cause. Beginning with an introduction to apologetics, and to the historical and religious context of late Victorian England, it investigates the rise of popular apologetics and the emergence of organised public speaking by Catholics. It then describes the history of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*, and the arc of its development, and that of popular apologetics in general. Frank Sheed was the Guild's leader. He was also the publisher most associated with the Catholic intellectual and literary revival of the inter-war period; the history of *Sheed & Ward* is outlined and placed in context. Sheed wrote several classic works of practical apologetics. His apologetical method is described with reference to examples, and assessed. Sheed's importance is evaluated. Reasons are sought for the eventual decline of the Guild, of Catholics speaking in public, and of popular apologetics.

Keywords: Apologetics, Catholic Evidence Guild, Frank Sheed

The first two thirds of the twentieth century was a golden age of apologetics in England. Gifted writers such as Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, Ronald Knox, Christopher Dawson and many others, employed their art in the service of the Church they loved, and which most of them had entered as adults, towards the fortification of the faith among Catholics, and the conversion of non-Catholic England.

Frank Sheed's position among the writers of the so-called 'Catholic Literary Revival' could be likened to that of conductor of the orchestra. He ran the publishing house *Sheed & Ward* over four decades, from the mid-1920s to the mid-1960s, and he was the publisher of many of their best-known works.

But he was more than just an organiser, because he was himself one of the best of the Catholic writers of the era.

Sheed's twenty-nine books were published over a period of fifty-five years; the first was written in 1926, and the last in 1981, the year of his death. His best works were critical and commercial triumphs when published and have never been out of print; several of them have been translated into other languages. Among them are several classics, such as *A Map of Life*, *Theology and Sanity* and *To Know Christ Jesus*.

Throughout the period of the Literary Revival, from the 1890s through to the 1960s, there also flourished the so-called Catholic Evidence Movement, which produced an army of street-corner apologists who taught the Catholic faith to the general public, speaking from soapboxes to the crowds in the parks and on the street corners of (first) London, and (later) other major cities. The movement was made up of several organizations, but the largest of them was the *Catholic Evidence Guild*. At the height of the *Guild's* work in the 1930s it could count on over 600 open-air-speakers nationally, as well as the supporting work of many thousands of other helpers.

Frank Sheed was there too. He and his wife, Maisie Ward, were great street orators who led the *Catholic Evidence Guild* from the early 1920s through to World War II, recruiting and training its speakers, writing – and publishing – its training outlines, rallying the faithful at the annual meetings, and urging forward the mission for the 'conversion of England'. For other Catholic writers, apologetics was important; for Frank Sheed, it was his life's work.

Sheed was a street-corner speaker first and foremost, before he was a publisher or writer. The influence of speaking from the open-air platform influenced his work both as a writer and as a publisher.

The object of the dissertation is to study the work of Frank Sheed, publisher, writer and public orator in the cause of 'Catholic truth', in the context of the Catholic Evidence Movement. The thesis aims further to show how the *Catholic Evidence Guild* exerted its wider influence, which it did through Sheed's writings, and further through the activities of the publishing house *Sheed & Ward*. The study examines Sheed's apologetical writings and analyses his apologetics, comparing it with the apologetics of the *Guild*. It also compares Sheed's apologetics with that of the scientific treatise of Apologetics, and draws conclusions as to its continuity with it, and its novelty.

There are several reasons why, among the apologetical writers of the twentieth century, the figure of Frank Sheed should be especially intriguing

to the student of apologetics. Firstly, Sheed's apologetical works speak to the reader with authority. This is because they respond to a real need to explain Catholicism to a real audience, which had real difficulties with the faith. Sheed met and debated with real crowds of people, and argued over points of real concern to them.

Secondly, Sheed is an excellent writer, with the ability to persuade. His best writing possesses an unusual clarity of expression, the result of a popular touch honed to perfection by years of speaking on the street corner podium. Other writers may display more surface brilliance, but of all that generation of apologists, Sheed is the most lucid. The Thesis aims to show that this is not just a matter of literary style; it arises also as a result of his apologetical system, which is interesting in itself.

Thirdly, Frank Sheed's books are well known. His major works are still in print. They are popular among Catholics in the English-speaking world, and several have appeared in foreign translations. Present-day apologists have praised Sheed's work, and acknowledged his influence on them.

This interest, which might be termed the historical angle, is all the greater because, as already mentioned, Sheed was a central figure in the 'Catholic Literary Revival' as publisher as well as writer. Because of his central position and his influence, the varied activity of Frank Sheed provides us with a vantage point from which one can attempt to descry the field of apologetics in England – and in the English language – in the twentieth century. To a surprising degree, Frank Sheed is the fixed point about which events turn, and other people move in and out of view with them.

There is a fourth reason why Sheed should be of interest: he was, unusually for the period, a theologian who was also a layman, with a wife and children to support; and one of the themes which makes an occasional appearance in his work is that of the need to be a saint. Thus his writings are of interest in the context of the development of lay spirituality in the twentieth century.

This work has analysed Sheed's importance from various perspectives: apologetical, literary, systematic, historical and spiritual, and draws several detailed conclusions. A general conclusion which covers all of them is that his work was central to twentieth century English language Catholic apologetics as a whole. But there is a final point: Sheed was a great communicator; his written apologetics reaches its target, as did his open-air lecturing. His best work is still read today, and gets a response more than half a century after it was originally conceived, in a world very different from our own.

The extract selected for publication consists of Chapter 3, which describes the dawn and earliest years of the Catholic Evidence Movement, followed by Chapter 5, which describes the *Catholic Evidence Guild*, the development of its organization and its training method, its rapid expansion and its development in the inter-war years, and the extent of its apostolic outreach. These chapters have been selected because they cover a little-known, but significant, installment in the history of English Catholicism.

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Frank Sheed and his world

Popular Apologetics in Twentieth Century England

1. THE DAWN OF THE CATHOLIC EVIDENCE MOVEMENT

The well-known Catholic apologist writers of the first two thirds of the twentieth century, such as G.K. Chesterton, Ronald Knox and Frank Sheed, were not alone in their effort to convey the truths of Catholicism to the sceptical British public. They were the beneficiaries of an already existent tradition of apologetics. However, since England did not have a Catholic University, it was hardly to be expected that the Catholic apologetical tradition there would much resemble the academic schools on the continent, or indeed the Anglican attempts at reaching an accommodation, described in the preceding chapter. The English Catholic tradition was forged on the public speaking platform rather than in the ivory tower.

The most methodical approach at producing a 'system' was that of the *Catholic Evidence Guild* (or *CEG*), whose teams of speakers, trained to expound the claims of the Catholic Church, organised lectures in the open air most evenings, and all day Sunday, from dozens of street corner platforms to audiences of hundreds of listeners. The *Guild* developed a detailed training programme and a demanding system of examinations for its lecturers. However, the *CEG* did not spring up in a vacuum; by the time it was founded in 1918, members of the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom* had been speaking in public for over two decades. The *Catholic Missionary Society* preached in dozens of parishes every year, reaching Catholics and Protestants alike. Meanwhile, the *Catholic Truth Society* sold several tens of thousands of penny pamphlets each week, covering every subject of interest to Catholics in clear, concise English. All of these related movements grew rapidly after the Great War, and this flowering of popular apologetics will be examined in later chapters. The seeds of the harvest of the 1920s and 1930s had been planted several decades earlier, in the

late Victorian era. Before describing the inter-war period in detail, therefore, it is necessary briefly to summarise the historical background, as well as some of the early pioneers in the field.

1.1. *The Planting of the Seeds*

The last two decades of the nineteenth century saw the beginnings of several important and enduring initiatives. Two generations had now passed since the *Roman Catholic Relief Act* of 1829, by which Catholics were freed from the crippling social and civil disabilities they had endured for nearly three centuries. Catholics were to be found in positions of responsibility in the public life of the country. The pattern of Church government had returned to normal with the restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy in 1850. The Catholic population, especially in the cities, had been increased by Irish immigration after the Famine, as well as by English converts from the Oxford Movement, two of whom were now cardinals. Many Catholic schools were built in these decades, often at the cost of great self-sacrifice which drew the communities further together. Pope Leo XIII provided English Catholics with reasons to take pride in their remoter past when he beatified Edmund Campion on 9 December 1886 and followed this up on 29 December by beatifying fifty-four more English martyrs, including John Fisher and Thomas More. Although the national anti-Catholic prejudice remained strong throughout the nineteenth century, Catholics in England had cause to hope that their situation would continue to improve in the years ahead.

This confident optimism was captured by the Bishop of Salford, Herbert Vaughan, in his address to the Annual Conference of the recently revived *Catholic Truth Society* in Birmingham in 1890. He invited his audience to ‘compare the attitude of England’ towards the Catholic Church ‘during the past 300 years’, when ‘legal penalties’ for professing the Catholic religion had been applied remorselessly, and Catholics had had to travel abroad to be educated, ‘with her attitude towards her today’¹. Now, in contrast, Catholics were ‘in honour equal’ with everyone else, filling all positions; among their number there were Viceroy and Governors of Colonies, Cabinet Ministers and Judges².

Now put this change down to whatever cause you please – to communication with the Continent, contact with Catholics, the abolition of class privileges and ascendancy, indifference in matters of religion, the spread of education

among all sectors of the people, the decay of prejudice, critical research which is causing the history of England to be rewritten – whatever the cause, the result, the change, is undeniable³.

Not only had ‘the attitude of the population’ changed, he continued, but so had the Established Church. Briefly, he summarised the changes: its ministers were openly preaching Catholic doctrines; Anglican bishops were claiming Catholic descent; lectures were being delivered and tracts circulated claiming that the Church of England was the true Catholic Church in England⁴. Compared with the past, England was already ‘half-Catholicised’. ‘If the progression of change be at the same ratio during the next 60 years as during the past’, he concluded, ‘before the end of another century England may be practically Catholic again’⁵. He did not mean that ‘materialists, rationalists and various stages of heresy’ would cease to exist, but rather that the Catholic Church would become ‘the most conspicuous, the most respected, the most trusted by the people of England’, that Protestantism would ‘pass away’, and that ‘the Old Church’ would ‘continue to expand and to win the hearts of the people’⁶. The Bishop concluded his address by calling for a renewal of the ‘Apostolate of Prayer for the Conversion of England’. He noted ‘with admiration’ the ‘recent establishment’ of the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom for the Conversion of England*, and he called upon the *Catholic Truth Society* to ‘find its place as a powerful cooperator, by printing and distributing everywhere leaflets and tracts’, which would enlist the heart and mind of its readership in this apostolate⁷. It is time to look at these two associations – both of which still exist today – as well as other organisations which operated within the span of a generation up to and including the Great War.

1.2. *The Catholic Truth Society*

The *Catholic Truth Society* (or *CTS*) had been revived in 1884, after twelve years of inactivity. Its first President was the aforementioned Bishop Vaughan⁸. He was assisted by two Honorary Secretaries, Fr W.H. Cologan and Mr James Britten. The person who really directed the *Society* from the start was James Britten⁹, who initially carried on ‘the whole work of the society with very slight help’ and kept its entire stock of literature in his house until February 1887, when lack of space forced the operation to set up an office of its own¹⁰.

The ‘revival’ of the *Catholic Truth Society* practically amounted to a new foundation. As Britten explained in 1891, ‘a body bearing the same name’ had been organised in 1868 by Fr Vaughan (at that stage not yet a bishop)¹¹, but ‘this organisation had died away’ because of ‘a variety of circumstances’, and ‘the present body’, which ‘had no name’ at first, ‘took its rise quite independently of it’. The name, however, was ‘revived’ at a meeting on 4 November 1884, ‘under the presidency of Bishop Vaughan’, who had taken an interest in the new work and wished to promote it¹². The *Society’s* aims were ‘briefly stated’ as follows:

1. To disseminate among Catholics small and cheap devotional works.
2. To assist the uneducated poor to a better knowledge of their religion.
3. To spread among Protestants information about Catholic Truth.
4. To promote the circulation of good, cheap, and popular Catholic works¹³.

The *Catholic Truth Society* had no significant competitors in the business of distributing cheap Catholic pamphlets, and its methods proved to be highly successful. Its booklets were distributed to church door racks – as they still are – where, often unsupervised, they sold for a penny each. Its literature ranged from ‘stories and poems with a Catholic flavour, lives of the saints, biographies of famous figures in Church History, selections from the Scripture, and little books of devotion’¹⁴. By the end of 1891, 60,000 copies of its *Little Rosary Book* had been printed¹⁵, while its most popular publication, *The Simple Prayer Book*, had already sold 200,000 copies¹⁶. Other CTS publications also sold widely, especially controversial leaflets, which aimed ‘to make known the claims’ of the Catholic Church, and ‘to destroy the absurd traditions concerning her’ that ‘Protestant tradition’ had ‘handed down’¹⁷. These pamphlets were distributed at Protestant and anti-Catholic gatherings ‘largely through the agency of the *Guild of Ransom*’¹⁸. There were also pamphlets which aimed ‘to furnish Catholic artisans’ with answers to the rationalistic theories which were then ‘constantly the subject of conversation among men employed in factories and workshops’, as well as replies to ‘the sneers or objections of Protestants’¹⁹. Besides being sold as independent pamphlets, most of its publications were also available bound up as part of shilling volumes, as part of a connected series or as miscellaneous collections²⁰.

Herbert Vaughan became Archbishop of Westminster in 1892, and the Presidency of the *Catholic Truth Society* thus moved south from Salford to

London. Cardinal Vaughan's successor, Francis Bourne, took over the Presidency on his appointment as Archbishop of Westminster in 1903. But it was James Britten who ran the *Catholic Truth Society* for the first thirty-eight years of its existence, as Honorary Secretary (1884-1922). He wrote some of its 'controversial literature' himself; his obituary in *The Times* mentioned 'a volume entitled *Protestant Fictions*' [sic], and a pamphlet, *Why I Left the Church of England*, which 'had a very large circulation'²¹. He also organised the *Society's* annual conference which, in 1910, was merged into the National Catholic Congress²². Under Britten's energetic and methodical leadership sales of pamphlets 'advanced year by year'²³. Almost every subject of importance to Catholics was addressed in the *Society's* literature with 'a short and usually very able presentment of the case for Catholicism'²⁴. Other 'bodies bearing the same name' were started up 'in the first instance through its agency', in Scotland (1890), Ireland (1899), Australia (1904), and various other countries²⁵. The *Catholic Social Guild* also owed its origins to the CTS.²⁶ By 1909, after twenty-five years of publishing, about nine million pamphlets had been sold, including 1,170,000 copies of the ever-popular *Simple Prayer Book*. The penny copies of the Gospels had sold nearly 200,000 copies, and the penny booklets of daily meditation had reached 114,000. Pamphlets devoted to various aspects of controversy with Anglicans and Protestants amounted to 900,000 sales in total. Within this category the best-selling publications were Newman's *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England* (100,000 copies), *The True History of Maria Monk* (89,000) and Britten's own *Why I left the Church of England* (30,000)²⁷. The activities of the *Society* were financed mainly by subscriptions of ten shillings annually per member; ten pounds was a life subscription²⁸. From 1909 onwards, after a suggestion by Cardinal Bourne, Britten was assisted by an 'Organising Secretary' to share the increasing workload. The Cardinal made a donation to contribute towards two years' salary for the new official²⁹.

The goal of the new arrangement was to enable more time to be devoted to increasing the *Society's* membership, upon which the total annual subscription income depended, thereby boosting the finance available to produce more good and cheap Catholic literature, and through that same augmentation of membership simultaneously increasing the circulation of its booklets. Although concrete figures are lacking in the literature, there is report of a 'decided increase' in sales in the few years remaining before the Great War³⁰, and of a slump during it. A pamphlet published in 1922 claims an annual

figure until the war ‘somewhat checked’ activities, of ‘upwards of a million’ pamphlets³¹. The first Organising Secretary was the writer Mr George Elliot Anstruther³². Like Britten, Anstruther wrote some of the *Society*’s booklets himself, with titles that reflected his experiences as a public speaker, such as *Catholic Answers to Protestant Charges*, and *The Protestant Platform*³³. However, in spite of the best efforts of the two men, membership was still disappointingly low when Anstruther left the *Society* in 1920 in order to return to journalism with *The Tablet*. Paid up subscribers at the start of 1921 numbered only 1,737, a figure ‘quite unworthy of the Catholic body and of the importance of the Society’s work’³⁴. That was about to change.

1.3. *The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom*

The *Guild of Ransom for the Conversion of England*, known today as the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom*, was founded in 1887 by Fr Philip Fletcher³⁵, and the man who came to be known as his ‘brave ally’³⁶, Mr Lister Drummond³⁷. The new organisation grew quickly, and by the summer of 1890 it could count on the support of 13,000 members, including 758 priests³⁸. The *Guild* pursued its objectives in several ways, most notably through the organisation of public pilgrimages and processions. The greatest of these events was an annual walk from Newgate Gaol to Tyburn, following the old route from the prison to the public gallows, the ‘*Via Dolorosa*’ of many Catholic martyrs in recusant times³⁹. This procession was held on the last Sunday in April, in advance of the feast, then still recently instituted, of the beatified martyrs of England and Wales on 4 May⁴⁰. The route came to an end outside the front door of a convent of contemplative Benedictine nuns a few yards away from the former place of execution. The event would conclude with a service of reparation, with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament being given from the balcony above to the congregation kneeling below on the pavement⁴¹.

In 1894 the *Guild* embarked on a new apostolate. Lister Drummond – who had a flair for public speaking – together with other members of the *Guild* under his direction, began to teach Catholic doctrine to the crowds which used to assemble – as they do nowadays, albeit in smaller numbers than formerly – to hear and sometimes to heckle the orators at Speakers’ Corner, which is just on the other side of the Marble Arch from Tyburn⁴². The real novelty in this activity was not so much the public speaking in itself, as the fact that the speakers were generally ordinary lay Catholics rather than priests or

religious. Drummond was a convert to the faith, and at this time his mother was a member of the Salvation Army⁴³. It is said that it was she who challenged him to start teaching Catholic doctrine in public⁴⁴. This new apostolate soon became a regular activity, with the involvement of several other powerful debaters. George Elliot Anstruther, the future Organising Secretary of the *Catholic Truth Society*, was an early member of the team; he was said to be ‘the most brilliant of the first outdoor lecturers’⁴⁵. The ‘Open Air Lecture Work’, as it was called, quickly spread from the stand in Hyde Park to other pitches in London⁴⁶. By 1895 training classes had been set up for the preparation and qualification of outdoor speakers – a precedent which would later be followed and developed by the *Catholic Evidence Guild*. The open air lecture work, although it was never the main activity of the *Guild*, continued successfully for two decades, until it was largely interrupted by the Great War.

Lister Drummond died in 1916. After he was appointed district judge in 1912 he had already curtailed his activities as a street orator, after eighteen years on the platform⁴⁷. He can fairly be credited with the original inspiration and early organisation of the street corner apologetics which reached its full maturity in the work of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*. It was said of him that ‘his unfailing courtesy, tact and kindness were shown in his method of lecturing, and conducting controversy’⁴⁸. The apostolate which he had initiated resumed after the war. By 1921, out of a total membership which had grown to 70,000 *Ransomers*⁴⁹, about twenty-five were attending the re-established training classes⁵⁰. At that time the *Guild* regularly organised speaking pitches south of the river (i.e., within Southwark diocese), on the Clapham Road, in Thornton Heath and in Wimbledon; the last-named pitch was already being run jointly with the recently founded *Catholic Evidence Guild*⁵¹.

1.4. *The Barrow Brigade*

Nothing could better illustrate the synergy between the two movements, the pamphleteers on the one hand and the open air lecturers on the other, than the history of the *Barrow Brigade*. Their aims were, after all, identical: ‘the diffusion of Catholic teaching, the refutation of calumnies, and the removal of (...) ignorance’⁵². The *Ransomers* had already shown the connection to some extent, since as well as lecturing in the open air they distributed *CTS* Pamphlets⁵³. The members of the *Barrow Brigade*, on the other hand, gave public lectures precisely *in order to* sell *CTS* pamphlets. The *Brigade* was an

offshoot of the *Catholic Reading Guild*, whose motto was ‘The Conversion of England by Books’⁵⁴, and it was started up – probably – in the summer of 1912⁵⁵. The original idea, as the name suggests, was ‘to take out barrows’ loaded with *CTS* penny pamphlets, ‘and to sell them in the streets’⁵⁶. The sellers would engage passers-by in conversation about the Church’s teachings, and try to sell them a pamphlet on the topic they were speaking about. It was a natural development for the sales pitch to develop into a more developed speech, and thus the end result was along the lines of the open air lecture work⁵⁷. One of the members of the *Brigade*, Mr George Coldwell, a notably accomplished public speaker, published a book containing seven lectures which he delivered on these occasions⁵⁸. The book went through five editions⁵⁹. The *Barrow Brigade* was short-lived because most of the helpers were eventually called up for military service during the Great War⁶⁰. Its founder, Mr Ambrose Willis, died in the Palestinian campaign in 1917⁶¹. However, several of the team would later join the *Catholic Evidence Guild*; George Coldwell was an early member of its governing Council, and another helper, Mr Mark Symons, was its second Master⁶².

1.5. *The Catholic Missionary Society*

The *Westminster Diocesan Missionaries of Our Lady of Compassion* were formed in 1903 as an assemblage of secular priests, led by Fr Charles Rose Chase⁶³. The new *Society* was a response to Cardinal Vaughan’s desire for a missionary body dedicated to the conversion of England. He had previous experience of the kind of work he envisaged its members would carry out, having ‘personally given lectures to non-Catholics at various centres in and around London’⁶⁴. The Cardinal promoted the new *Society* from the very first, and ‘had its success very much at heart’⁶⁵. He wrote to Fr Chase on 13 February 1903: ‘We have some three hundred priests ministering to the needs of the flock, but outside this flock there are millions within our reach. (...) It is expressly to these millions that I send you to preach the Gospel’⁶⁶. At first the new *Society*’s scope was diocesan; later it was extended nationwide, and the name changed to the *Catholic Missionary Society* (or *CMS*)⁶⁷. Other priests volunteered for the work alongside Fr Chase. The very first to do so were Fr John Filmer, who later became Master of the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom*⁶⁸, and Fr Thomas Byles, who famously perished in the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912⁶⁹. Shortly afterward they were joined by Fr John Arendzen, who was

afterwards Director of Studies of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*⁷⁰, and by Fr Herbert Vaughan, who was later to succeed Fr Chase as Superior of the *Society*⁷¹. These five priests were all recently ordained at the time of the commencement of activities in 1903, although the Superior, Fr Chase, a former Anglican vicar, was the oldest by some twenty-five years. They lived together in a house in Gunnersbury, west London⁷².

In spite of some initial scepticism with regard to a permanent mission to non-Catholics, the results of the early missions were highly encouraging⁷³. It was found that the events not only resulted in the conversion of non-Catholics, but also strengthened the faith and practice of the local Catholics⁷⁴. The method of the *Society* was to hold its missions in parishes, 'with the co-operation of the local priests'. The lectures were typically given either in the parish church 'or in a hall hired for the purpose'. In the summer months a mission might begin in the open air and then move into the church⁷⁵. In 'small towns and villages' without a parish church, a motor chapel might be employed⁷⁶. The missions of the *Society* were carried out by priests, unlike the lecturing of the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom* and the *Barrow Brigade*, which was carried out by lay men. However, the work of the *Society* is still interesting as a precedent for that of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*, because the 'evidence lectures' which they delivered were not homilies; they were apologetic in character. Their content was directed toward the intellect rather than the heart, and aimed at answering problems which members of the audience had difficulties with, and thus removing obstacles to their conversion. The use of the Question-Box, into which hearers were desired to 'write down any objections' which might occur to them in the course of a lecture, or points regarding which they 'desired to be further enlightened', was found to be very useful⁷⁷. It is indicative of the relationship that Fr John Arendzen, one of the *Society's* first five priests, was to be entrusted with much of the training of the lecturers of the *Catholic Evidence Guild* and became its Director of Studies. Maisie Ward, who compiled the *Catholic Evidence Training Outlines*, dedicated them to him⁷⁸, and declared that it was he, a Dutchman, who had taught them 'to speak to the Englishman of today in a language he can understand'⁷⁹.

The Catholic Gazette, the monthly organ of the *Missionary Society*, contained 'apologetic papers by well-known writers', as well as a section called 'Question Box', giving 'answers to questions' which had 'actually been asked at meetings'⁸⁰. Most of the questions cited in these early issues were made

from a clearly Christian but Protestant standpoint. Seven questions are listed in the very first issue, of January 1910, of which here are the first three:

- 1) Why are Catholic priests forbidden to marry?⁸¹ Is this prohibition not contrary to nature, as well as to the practice of the early Church? (...)
- 2) Why do Catholic authorities forbid the laity to read the Bible?⁸²
- 3) Why is communion in the Catholic Church given only in one kind? Is this custom not contrary to Christ's ordinance as well as to the custom of the Church for many centuries?

Of the other four questions, one related to Confession, another to Purgatory, and the remaining two referred to papal infallibility⁸³.

Upon the death of Fr Chase in 1909, Fr Herbert Vaughan became the *Society's* second Superior⁸⁴. Not long afterwards the *Society* moved to a house in the district of Brondesbury Park, northwest London. The Cardinal formally opened the new headquarters on 16 June 1910⁸⁵. In July 1914, as war loomed, Fr Vaughan reported that the *Society* had given ninety-four missions in a little under five years, 'in fourteen of the sixteen dioceses of England and Wales'⁸⁶. By 1921, as the work recovered after the Great War, the *Society* was giving at least two missions each month⁸⁷, typically lasting one or two weeks, often with over one thousand people attending daily. There was also a clergy house in Willesden, 'containing two priests in charge of the parish'⁸⁸. Starting in September 1921, a four page supplement at the back of every monthly issue of *The Catholic Gazette* formed a kind of magazine-within-a-magazine, containing news about the work of the newly formed *Catholic Evidence Guild* and planned lecture times for the coming month.

1.6. *The Catholic Evidence Guild*

The *Catholic Evidence Guild*, or *CEG*, an organisation made up of ordinary lay Catholics and run by a Council elected by them, is the most representative expression of popular apologetics. In this section we will attempt to outline its origins and very earliest years.

The *Catholic Evidence Guild* was inaugurated on 24 April 1918 at a meeting in Cathedral Hall, Westminster, attended by 'about 200' people⁸⁹. The Archbishop of Westminster Cardinal Bourne presided⁹⁰. The first entry in the *Guild Minutes* book, dated the same day, states: 'The object of the *Guild* is to

supply a band of public speakers to bring home to audiences in the parks and public spaces of London the fundamental truths of Christianity⁹¹.

A contemporary witness, Fr Henry Browne, S.J., explains the background to the new foundation in great detail in his early history of the Catholic Evidence Movement, published in 1921; according to him the new *Guild* was a 'novel departure', and not a mere continuation of the outdoor lecture work of other organisations, such as the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom* and the *Barrow Brigade*. Exteriorly the main difference was only that the organisation of the lecture work was more efficiently carried out, but looking 'beneath the surface' there was a deeper difference. Browne's 'knowledge of facts and of persons' led him to the conclusion that the *Catholic Evidence Guild* had brought 'a new spirit into the Catholic life of the country'⁹². This 'new spirit' was a response to a new attitude towards Catholics in 'the nation as a whole'. Catholicism had stood the test of the Great War, where 'other forms of religion and irreligion' had failed⁹³. In the battle-zone, the 'unique power' of the faith had been displayed 'in camps, in trenches and in hospitals'. At home, too, the work done by Catholics was acknowledged as outstanding. 'Catholicity was in the air'⁹⁴. The English people had even adopted some 'Catholic' practices, such as prayers for the dead⁹⁵. It was in this atmosphere that the *Catholic Evidence Guild* took its origin; it was not just a 'chance breath of enthusiasm, but a deep patriotic stirring' to convert the whole nation⁹⁶.

Another factor made the formation of the new *Guild* more urgent: in the closing months of the Great War there was a marked increase in the activity of anti-Christian speakers in Hyde Park⁹⁷. The Cardinal was thus persuaded of the need for a new *Guild* of speakers, who would be ready not just to combat anti-Catholic controversy, but also to teach Christian principles positively⁹⁸.

The main problem, namely the difficulty of finding someone with the ability, energy and faith necessary to get such an ambitious undertaking off the ground, was resolved by the self-candidacy of Mr Vernon Redwood, a former brewery manager who had emigrated from Australia to England to start a new career as an operatic tenor⁹⁹. An experienced speaker himself, he had witnessed the atheist orators in Hyde Park, and he approached the Cardinal with his idea of countering them by lecturing in public close to their positions¹⁰⁰. The Cardinal gave permission for a meeting to take place in the Cathedral Hall, and that was the aforementioned meeting of 24 April 1918, at which the *Guild* was established¹⁰¹. After the inaugural meeting, which was addressed by the Cardinal and six other speakers, the new members set about

their task with enthusiasm¹⁰². The Cardinal became the first President of the *Guild*. The Council of the *Guild* was elected, and Vernon Redwood was nominated its first Master¹⁰³.

The Council spent much of the first six months, from April to October 1918, drafting the Constitution of the *CEG*. Although it was later to be revised, the basic scheme was kept¹⁰⁴. From the start there were two kinds of membership of the *Guild*. *Ordinary* members – later called *Associate* members –¹⁰⁵ merely attended the weekly lectures, which took place in the Wednesday meetings. One of the priest instructors would give lectures to the members, typically with titles such as ‘Spirituality and Immortality of the Soul’ or ‘Divinity of Our Lord’. A single title might cover several weeks of lectures, such as the course on ‘Proofs of the Existence of God’, which was given from 15 May to 19 June 1918 by Fr Ernest Messenger¹⁰⁶. Some lectures were highly specific, such as that given on 12 November 1919 by his successor as Director of Studies, Dr Arendzen¹⁰⁷: ‘Relationship between the Sees of Rome, Constantinople & Alexandria during the Nestorian controversy in order to illustrate how the universal jurisdiction of the Pope was acknowledged at the time’¹⁰⁸, or Fr Wray’s lecture of 15 December 1920, on Rationalism and Catholicism, ‘showing the rational position of the Church & the irrational position of the rationalist’¹⁰⁹. Sometimes a lay person might lecture, such as George Coldwell – formerly of the *Barrow Brigade* – whose lecture on 24 July 1918 was called ‘Lecture on lecturing’¹¹⁰. *Active* members, on the other hand, not only attended the meetings but were disposed to speak in public on its behalf. As yet there was no formalised training course for platform speakers, apart from attending the Wednesday evening lectures. There was no qualification system either, at first¹¹¹, but soon an examination was introduced for new members, which consisted of making a ‘test lecture’ at one of the *Guild* Meetings¹¹². If the candidate performed well enough, an outdoor licence might then be awarded at a subsequent monthly meeting of the *Guild’s* Council. There were at first only two kinds of licence: a General licence – these were rarely granted – which enabled the speaker to lecture on any subject, and a Council licence, which enabled its holder to give a lecture in one well defined area, such as ‘Infallibility’ or ‘Our Lady’. A third category, the Chairman’s licence, was later added as an intermediate class¹¹³. Holders of such a license could ‘lecture only on subjects’ in which they had ‘been tested’, but could ‘take general questions’¹¹⁴.

The *raison d’être* of the *Catholic Evidence Guild* was the outdoor work. Starting on Sunday 4 August 1918, Vernon Redwood, ‘ably supported by Mr.

Hand as Hon. Secretary of the new *Guild*, had taken his outdoor platform into Hyde Park and begun to lecture¹¹⁵. An audience 'of about 500 persons listened attentively' to this first foray, and 'an average of about 300 persons weekly' over the next few months¹¹⁶. The reactions of the crowd had been 'consistently friendly and respectful', in spite of the attentions of 'the extreme Protestant section known as the Kensitites', and often showed 'a preference for them over other platforms'¹¹⁷. Redwood and Hand were joined by others.

By the end of 1920 the *Guild* was holding on average ten public meetings every week, manned by twenty speakers, who were speaking for twenty four hours in total¹¹⁸. The *Guild* began to throw out branches; since the organisation of the CEG was diocesan, the branches were independent, under the presidency of the local bishop. In July 1920 Redwood opened a centre in Cardiff, and announced that 'he hoped soon to establish a centre in Newport'¹¹⁹. In October Fr Arendzen 'formally opened the Plymouth Branch of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*: the Vicar General & other priests being present'¹²⁰. New branches were on the point of starting in Liverpool and in Birmingham¹²¹.

In the two-and-a-half years in which Vernon Redwood was Master, from April 1918 to October 1920, the *Guild* established stable foundations. In July 1918 it was reported that 'about 40 learners' were attending the meetings, and an average of about 24 were attending each week¹²². By the end of 1918 average attendance had doubled to 50 each week. At the end of 1919 the corresponding figure had leapt to 130, and at the end of 1920 it had risen again to 150 people¹²³.

Meetings were held in the Cathedral Hall until 5 May 1920, when they were transferred to the nearby '*Guild Hut*', which 'owing mainly to the exertions of Mr Redwood'¹²⁴ had been purchased from the *Catholic Women's League*¹²⁵. The Hut lay within the cathedral precincts, and had a capacity for 'an audience of from 200 to 300' people¹²⁶. It was an ideal location for its *Guild* meetings. It housed a canteen where tea and light refreshments were served; this 'enabled members to come straight from work and, without the expense of restaurants, have a meal before going into the training class instead of going to their homes many of which were a considerable distance away. And of course there was the opportunity to talk about experiences on the pitch'¹²⁷. Under an arrangement with *Bexhill Library*, the CEG received a loan of 400 books for a reference library, which was housed in the Hut for the use of speakers. The *Catholic Reading Guild* also gave assistance¹²⁸.

In October 1920, Redwood stepped aside as Master, and a new Council was elected to carry the work forward.

1.7. *Conclusions*

The thirty years following the foundation of the *Catholic Truth Society* in 1884 saw the beginnings of a new kind of organised apostolic activity among Catholics. By 1914 the open-air lecture work of the *Ransomers* was well established in London, and the *Catholic Missionary Society* was organizing an average of close on twenty missions each year. In the immediate aftermath of the First World War, Catholics perceived a new, more positive attitude towards them in the nation as a whole, and one of the results – shortly before the end of the conflict – was the foundation of the *Catholic Evidence Guild* in London. By the end of 1920 it was expanding and spreading to other cities, even before the arrival of its most famous speaker-organiser, Frank Sheed.

2. THE WESTMINSTER CATHOLIC EVIDENCE GUILD

In this section we outline the *Guild's* historical trajectory through the 1920s and 1930s, as well as describing its unique ethos. Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward both had a decisive impact on its development; we introduce them, as well as some of the other people who were involved with its work.

2.1. *Professionalisation and Expansion*

In the final year of his Mastership, 1919-1920, Redwood consented to a partial re-drafting of the *Guild* constitution ‘along the lines of separation of function and specialisation’, in order to address concerns that had arisen about the training of speakers for the platform¹²⁹. In the elections of October 1920 Mark Symons became Master of the *Guild*¹³⁰. The new Secretary was Maisie Ward¹³¹. The new team set about implementing the new constitution. The role of the Master was reduced to be ‘rather the Chairman of a board (the Executive Committee) than sole authority as heretofore’¹³². An Executive Committee was set up, consisting of the ‘chief officers of the leading parts of the *Guild*’¹³³. Three new subcommittees were set up: the Outdoor Committee, chaired by the Master, in charge of the effective organisation of the outdoor meetings¹³⁴; the Propaganda Committee, chaired by the Vice-Master, in charge of advertising and ‘obtaining recruits’¹³⁵; and the Hut and Finance Committee¹³⁶. Most importantly, the Practical Training Committee ‘was

strengthened as to its membership', and was 'enabled to increase its activities considerably'¹³⁷. For active members of the *Guild* – those who were disposed to lecture in public – additional evenings every week were given over 'to the work of instruction and practice', organised by the 'Practical Training Committee'¹³⁸. Systematic courses were elaborated and delivered. Students were split into two groups of different levels of proficiency¹³⁹. By late 1921, in addition to the two-hour general meeting on the Wednesday, when the weekly lecture was given for all *Guild* members, there was a two hour study class on the Tuesday evening, which 'all intending speakers should attend', a course of 90 minute lectures on the *Summa Theologiae* by the well-known Dominican Fr Vincent McNabb on the Thursday evening¹⁴⁰, and a two hour debating class on the Friday evening¹⁴¹. The demanding training system meant that prospective *Guild* speakers could look forward to a very busy life-style, and that was even before they began to speak on the platform.

The immediate and direct result of this 'professionalisation' of the *Guild's* training scheme was a 'spate of new speakers'¹⁴², and a rapid expansion of its work. The statistics are unanimous in pointing to a massive increase in all its modes of operation. By September 1921, as Mark Symons wrote in the *Catholic Evidence Guild* supplement at the back of *The Catholic Gazette*, attendance at the weekly general meetings, which lasted two hours, had swelled to 'about 200' (up from 150)¹⁴³. The planned weekly outdoor lecture schedule of the *Guild*, listed in the same issue, included 21 public meetings of a total duration of 53½ hours (up from ten meetings a year earlier, of a duration of 24 hours). But to get a true impression of the magnitude of the task, it is necessary to see the list of events, which is given as follows in *The Catholic Gazette* of that month¹⁴⁴:

Sundays:	Hyde Park: 11-1 and 2.30-10pm
	Regents Park: 3-6pm
	Finsbury Park: 3-6pm
	Highbury Corner: 7-10pm
	Southall: 7-10pm
	Golders Green: 8-10pm
	Hammersmith 8-10pm
	Shepherds Bush: 8-10pm
	Broad Street, Soho: 1-2.30pm
	Hyde Park: 6.30-10pm
Mondays:	Wealdstone: 8-10pm

Tuesdays:	Tower Hill: 1-2pm
Wednesdays:	Hyde Park: 6.30-7.30pm
Thursdays:	Leather Lane: 1-2pm Hyde Park: 6.30-10pm
Fridays:	Tower Hill: 1-2pm Red Lion Square: 1-2.30pm Hyde Park: 7-10pm
Saturdays:	Portobello Road: 8-10pm Hyde Park: 5-10pm

By the end of 1921 the increasing number of ‘new lecturers passing tests every week’¹⁴⁵ had resulted in the addition of four more public meetings to the list¹⁴⁶. In her Annual Report as Secretary for the year to November 1921, Maisie Ward was able to state without reserve that ‘The year now finished has been one of great development in almost every section of the work, and has been fruitful in many ways’¹⁴⁷. The Practical Training ordinary class had in November 1920 ‘averaged about ten’. In October 1921 attendance was ‘rarely less than fifty’¹⁴⁸. The record of test lectures for the year listed in the Minutes of the *Guild meetings*, while not complete, showed a substantial increase over the period, with 21 tests registered in the first six months and no less than 81 in the second six months. Latterly, ‘new speakers’ had ‘been passing out at the rate of two per week’¹⁴⁹. The growth in the outdoor meetings, which were obviously the most important aspect of the *Guild’s* work, were portrayed in a table, thus:

Growth in the C.E.G. 1920-1921	1920	1921
Meetings per week	10	25
Hours spoken per week	24	60
Speakers	20	60

This was, as Maisie Ward stated, ‘an increase of nearly 200 per cent’ in just twelve months¹⁵⁰. ‘On Sundays at Hyde Park’, she continued, ‘the Catholic Church gets a hearing for ten hours, on Saturday for five hours, besides shorter periods on other nights’; and the work of the *Guild* extended ‘from Southall in the West to Bow in the East’¹⁵¹.

The expansion continued over the next few years. By the time Frank Sheed was elected Master for the first time in November 1922, the work had ‘spread to 30 meetings weekly of a total duration of 80 hours’¹⁵². In March 1923 it was reported to the Executive that ‘over 90 speakers were working at the various pitches regularly’¹⁵³. A month later there were ‘nearly 100 trained speakers in the *Guild*’¹⁵⁴. Estimates of meetings held and lectures given were based on detailed weekly returns collated by the Outdoor Committee for presentation at meetings of the *Guild’s* Council¹⁵⁵. Meanwhile, in October 1921 Cardinal Bourne had conferred on the *Catholic Evidence Guild* canonical status; its official title – or rather, subtitle – was *Westminster Diocesan Catechists*¹⁵⁶. That same month Pope Benedict XV sent his Papal Blessing, and a message of encouragement to the newly formed Birmingham *CEG*¹⁵⁷.

2.2. *The Speakers*

In his booklet, *The Catholic Evidence Guild*, published in 1926, Frank Sheed, who succeeded Mark Symons as the *CEG’s* third Master in the elections of 1922, wrote that the work of the *Guild* had to develop ‘on a foundation of obscure lives well lived’¹⁵⁸. Frank Sheed (Master 1922-24, 1927-29, 1935-36, 1938-39) was himself relatively unknown when he wrote these words, although of course he and Maisie Ward were later to become well-known. Since the *Guild* was a grass-roots organisation made up of ordinary people, most of its membership lived ‘obscure lives’. More is known about many of its leaders, but even so they consisted of a wide cross-section of society. Its founder Vernon Redwood (Master 1918-1920), with his background in brewing and Queensland politics, was one of the more colourful figures¹⁵⁹. A contemporary described him as ‘a heavily built man, possessing a resonant voice and a winning manner’, and the style of ‘a demagogue working for a great cause’¹⁶⁰. Redwood’s successor Mark Symons (Master 1920-1922), was an artist whose paintings later became well-known, although ‘famous’ would be too strong a description¹⁶¹. George Coldwell ran a second-hand bookshop¹⁶². John Seymour Jonas, who like George Coldwell was on the *CEG* Council, was a tobacco merchant¹⁶³. Frank Sheed rated him as one of the three best outdoor speakers he had ever heard¹⁶⁴. There were *Guild* members who were in local government, such as Maurice Burns (Master 1931-33), who was Alderman of Hornsey Borough Council – later its Mayor – and chaired its Education Committee¹⁶⁵. There were literary types such as Alice

Curtayne, of the Liverpool *Guild*, who was a broadcaster and writer, the author of a biography of Catherine of Siena¹⁶⁶. Another literary member of the *Guild* was Tom Burns, a director – later the editor – of *The Tablet*¹⁶⁷; Maisie Ward mentions ‘the quality of his *CEG* speaking’ in her memoirs¹⁶⁸. There were lawyers, such as the barrister Maurice Gravenor Hewins (Master 1925-27, 1929-31, 1933-35)¹⁶⁹, whose distinguished father, William Hewins, had been a government minister and the first director of the London School of Economics¹⁷⁰. Scholars belonged, such as Alfred Leslie Squire (Master 1924-25), who had carried off prizes at Oxford University in Hebrew and Greek¹⁷¹. Louisa Cozens, in contrast, had no more than a primary school education. A cockney cleaning lady, she was one of the *CEG*’s most gifted speakers. She ‘had taught herself Latin, had studied a great deal of St Thomas, and read her way into the Church’¹⁷². Both Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward reckoned that she was the finest theologian that the Westminster *Guild* possessed¹⁷³. In what little leisure time she could spare between scrubbing floors and speaking from the platform, Cozens wrote a book on heresies which has been reprinted several times¹⁷⁴. Another very able speaker was Ronald Flaxman (Master 1936-38), a convert from Methodism – via Anglicanism – whose lectures at Tower Hill platform in the City resulted in several conversions. He was a clerk at one of the banks; as a young man his employer informed him that his speaking activity was not approved of, and that he could ‘expect no promotion if he continued it’¹⁷⁵. He ignored the warning, continued his lecturing, and ‘remained a lowly bank clerk all his working life’¹⁷⁶. In 1960 he was awarded a Papal Knighthood¹⁷⁷.

A few priests were regular speakers for the *CEG*. The best known was the Dominican preacher Fr Vincent McNabb, who filled one of the hour-long slots on the Hyde Park platform every week for twenty-five years. A regular listener – and heckler – at his meetings has left us a description: ‘A slight figure of about medium height, with bent shoulders, wearing his loose well-worn Dominican habit of coarse black and white material, a khaki haversack slung over his shoulder, thick knitted white stockings, heavy-soled, black, old-fashioned shoes, usually unlaced, and a battered shapeless soft black felt hat, the blackness turning green with age. A keen, lined, ascetic face, with old-style steel-rimmed spectacles; a smile hovering on his lips which seemed to exude friendliness and captivate his audience. He at once impressed his listeners with his personality, and with his appearance Sunday after Sunday, he became a great favourite’¹⁷⁸.

But nearly all *Guild* speakers were lay people. Maisie Ward commented that among them ‘were boys and girls who left school at fourteen; there were (...) teachers, typists, bus-conductors, nurses, scientists, housemaids and professors. We have everybody in the *Guild*’¹⁷⁹. The ordinariness of most of the members of the *CEG* has largely preserved them from the attention of historians¹⁸⁰. However, from the sketchy details that we have of these ‘obscure lives well lived’, a picture emerges of the face of English Catholicism in the decades between the two World Wars. Hundreds of very ordinary men and women of all conditions and walks of life were constantly absorbed in the study of Catholic doctrine, with the aim of transmitting it from the podium every week. They ‘talked theology with one another all the time’¹⁸¹. At their evening training sessions speakers would share their experiences of the previous week’s lecture and swap impressions as how best to convey to next week’s audience what they had learned that evening. As has been observed by subsequent writers, social barriers counted for little: ‘University graduates willingly consulted a charwoman and a convent school graduate about the finer points of Thomistic Theology’¹⁸².

The open-air lecturers were not alone in their missionary enterprise. Many thousands of well-wishers followed the news of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*’s activities. Also thriving at this time were the *Catholic Missionary Society*, the *Catholic Truth Society*, and the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom*, all of which had an apologetic dimension to their work. The general interest in apologetics provides a context for the books of Catholic apologetics that were published at this time; the ideas may seem simple compared with some of the lines of thought developed on the continent, but appearances can be deceiving. The language may be plain, designed to convey the doctrine to the man on the street corner, but the ideas thereby transmitted are not simple. Frank Sheed is the most outstanding example of this popularising tendency. As he explained in the preface of the Revised Edition of what is probably his most important work, *Theology and Sanity*: ‘Theological language is a useful tool for specialists: I learnt to use it: then I learnt not to. I got more out of the specialists by forcing them into plain English’¹⁸³. Sheed elaborated further in *Faith Comes By Hearing*: ‘The *Guild* talks are to non-captive audiences. To hold people who can walk away the moment they are bored, we had to find ways of uttering the faith which would really interest them: and of what we learnt out there the indoor speaker could be the beneficiary – after all, he loses as many crowds as we but does not usually discover it because their bodies are still there’¹⁸⁴.

2.3. *The Lectures*

As part of the establishment of the *Guild's* first training scheme in 1919 some *Advice for Intending Speakers* was issued 'by way of introduction to the, then, new scheme of lectures on the main topics of the Protestant controversy'¹⁸⁵. The text, with modifications, was later incorporated into the *Guild Handbook*¹⁸⁶. On the subject of literature, the *Advice* recommends that the 'intending speaker' make frequent use of the New Testament. It instructs the would-be lecturer not to be 'content with just one reading', but to 'read, re-read and keep on reading' in the subjects of his choice, and to 'make a practice of taking notes on points in the lectures'¹⁸⁷. When speaking in public, the policy advocated is one of positive exposition: the speaker is enjoined to 'deal, as far as possible, in broad, simple outlines: description, i.e. explanation, rather than argument, being your main objective'. Questions must be answered 'crisply and to the point', but the lecturer must 'get back always from details of controversy to the main questions – God, morality, revelation, authority, etc'¹⁸⁸. Finally the notes describe the audience in terms that show that in the immediate post-war years most members of it were expected to be Christians:

[The audience] will consist chiefly of ordinary English Protestants and indifferentists, the former imbued deeply with a few simple notions of what Catholicism and 'true religion' respectively consist. (...) They all have some grasp of the truth and our work must be to make them realise more and more clearly the truths they already hold, while leading them forward to the full truth and unity of the Church¹⁸⁹.

How did these guidelines work out when put into practice? Fr Henry Browne, who wrote the early history of the Catholic Evidence Movement, was especially impressed by a *CEG* lecture that he witnessed on Tower Hill¹⁹⁰. A woman, 'one of the most effective of the Guild speakers', had been challenged to a debate on a neutral platform by a Christadelphian. It was not in fact usual to accept challenges of this kind¹⁹¹. However, on this occasion it was deemed 'unwise' not to accept¹⁹². So at the time arranged the Christadelphian speaker began the debate by laying into the Catholic belief on the institution of the Eucharist. The observer records that 'he spoke fluently, but his manner was as declamatory as his ideas were crude (...) The crowd seemed to me to be anxious to hear the lady controversialist, and to know

how she would deal with a bitter, if not a violent, attack¹⁹³. What happened next is worth quoting *in extenso*:

We soon felt that there was no cause for alarm. Before she had reached her second or third sentence it was evident that she had chosen an excellent method of debate. With perfect courtesy she regretted that in his statement her adversary had shown himself quite unable to understand the Catholic view; then she proceeded practically to ignore his existence, except in so far that now and again incidentally she referred to the Scriptural texts which he had travestied. She agreed with him that St. John did not describe the actual institution of the Holy Eucharist, but, she went on, his gospel is full of the doctrine that Christ came to confer upon His followers a new life, something utterly different from human life as a merely natural thing. Being God He Himself possessed a Divine life, and it was this that He came to impart to His creatures according to their capacity. Now, every kind of life requires its own food, whether corporal life, which requires bread; intellectual life, which requires a different sort of sustenance; or spiritual life, which requires some thing higher still. Divine life will require a food which is also Divine. Next she referred to the promises related by St. John in his sixth chapter, which show plainly that our Lord would give His flesh for the life of men, and that it would be impossible for them to live their new kind of existence without this food. Again, how the statement caused difficulty among the hearers, and how it was subsequently more explicitly and emphatically reaffirmed. The speaker ended by describing how Catholics realize that this Eucharistic food really is the very life of their Church and of themselves, how they are consciously sustained in their existence here, and how it is preparing them to live their divine life for ever. These words, which evidently came from the heart (for the speaker showed no trace of self-consciousness), markedly affected her listeners¹⁹⁴.

Browne's description is revelatory of the high standard attained by the best speakers of the *CEG* at this early stage of its existence, a mere three years after its foundation, even before the emergence from within its ranks of its most famous Master, Frank Sheed¹⁹⁵. Browne concluded that although the Christadelphian was 'no fool', and 'at least an average good speaker', it was 'the quiet, hardly controversial and intensely sincere utterance of the Catholic apologist' which impressed the listeners much more. 'If the Guild will try to cultivate this quiet style', he wrote, 'they will find their work easy and their victory assured'¹⁹⁶.

This impression was shared by other independent observers. *The Catholic Gazette* of April 1922 recorded a 'generous tribute' paid to 'the work of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*' in the pages of the High Anglican *Church Times*. With-

in an article about the open-air speakers in Hyde Park, and their audiences, it was stated that the lady who spoke for the *Guild* 'was not controversial, and held a large audience by the lucidity, competence and modesty of her exposition'¹⁹⁷. It must be admitted that not all *CEG* lecturers successfully mastered the 'quiet style'. The founder, Vernon Redwood, described by Maisie Ward as 'full of ardour for the Faith, with a very bad temper', sometimes could not resist expressing anger on the podium¹⁹⁸. James Byrne, who as Secretary of the Practical Training Committee¹⁹⁹ was responsible for compiling the *CEG* Handbook, was – ironically – also prone to 'violence on the platform'. According to Maisie Ward, his 'explosive' style had 'an odd but most useful effect on the crowd', since it removed altogether the 'suspicion of humbug'. Byrne's vocabulary may sometimes have been 'unsuitable in the presence of ladies', but it 'took the *Guild* out of that language altogether'²⁰⁰.

2.4. *Defining Controversies*

2.4.1. Women Speakers

The *Guild* faced several important questions in its earliest years, the resolution of which set the course of its successful later development²⁰¹. The first controversy arose very early on and was swiftly decided: the question of whether it was appropriate for women to speak on the platform. The question arose at the fourth *Guild* meeting on 15 May 1918 – three weeks after the inaugural meeting addressed by the Cardinal on 24 April – and the decision was held to be so important that it was referred to the Cardinal for his opinion²⁰², which came back in the affirmative²⁰³. Maisie Ward refers in her memoirs to a later related conflict that was apparently inspired by anti-feminist sentiments among certain *Guild* members; this was an attempt to prevent her re-election in 1924 to the chairmanship of the Practical Training Committee²⁰⁴. However, the early decision in 1918 in favour of women speakers was a decisive precedent, and the attempt of the anti-feminists six years later to unseat Maisie Ward ended in a fiasco²⁰⁵.

Besides her, several women were involved in the *Guild* as lecturers and organisers. The other most outstanding example in the early years of the Westminster *Guild* was Louisa Cozens, who was an eloquent speaker on the platform, and helped to devise the new training system²⁰⁶. The presence on the Council of both these women proved to be important in the next defining controversy, which followed on swiftly.

2.4.2. Practical Training

This most important controversy concerned the question of the training of speakers for the platform. Maisie Ward's memoirs are the main source of our knowledge of this difference of opinion. She joined the Council of the CEG in December 1918²⁰⁷. Within a few months her experiences – and those of others – of attempting to address the concerns of her audiences from the outdoor platform had led her to the opinion that the issue of training needed to be tackled and placed on a more systematic footing. As she describes the Wednesday evening lectures in her memoirs, 'various priests lectured to us, speaking usually well above our heads, no questions were ever asked *of us*, no examinations held to decide if we were qualified to speak. And the lectures were unconnected, not a course'²⁰⁸. Other members of the Council who shared her opinions were Mark Symons, Louisa Cozens and James Byrne²⁰⁹. Maisie Ward recounts how the four of them met to try to put together a training programme, with the encouragement of Fr Arendzen²¹⁰. However, on the issue of systematic training for speakers, some *Guild* members disagreed with them, and one of them was the first Master of the *Guild*, Vernon Redwood. His vision of the *Guild* was, it would seem, less ambitious than hers, and perhaps more typical of the outlook of the pioneer speakers of the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom*²¹¹. As Debra Campbell puts it, following Maisie Ward's account, Redwood's 'concern' when founding the *Guild* had been to counter the 'blasphemous anti-Catholic speakers in Hyde Park'. Redwood 'advocated simple speeches showing that Catholics affirmed the basic Christian doctrines'²¹². He, and those who thought as he did, saw no need for the rigorous training programme she was advocating.

From the memoirs of Maisie Ward, written many years after the event, as also from later accounts by writers who were not present at the time, an impression is given that the disagreement between the factions was particularly sharp²¹³. However, in the contemporary records there is no sign of a *serious* conflict over training, either in published works or the Minutes of the *Guild* – which mention other disputes²¹⁴. It is possible to read signs of a difference of emphasis into these sources – since they all show that the *Guild* moved in a particular direction – but not of outright opposition. The researcher is thus faced with a problem: was the extent of the disagreement obscured in the contemporary records, or was it exaggerated in later accounts? The truth may be somewhere in the middle. Redwood was afterwards involved in other contro-

versies, as we shall see, and they may have coloured later retellings of this one. In fact it seems that when Redwood, in keeping with the *Guild's* rule that no Master should serve for more than two terms consecutively, insisted on stepping down²¹⁵, the Council then declared itself – unanimously, according to the Minutes – in favour of his continuing as Vice-Master²¹⁶, and he was elected to that post in the elections of October 1920²¹⁷. This is hardly indicative of the rancour or bitterness which most likely would have remained at that time had a fierce struggle taken place over the preceding year. It seems most reasonable to suppose that after originally strongly opposing the proposed changes, Redwood conceded on amicable terms, as he began to appreciate, as Sheed put it, the magnitude of ‘the intellectual labour’ the *Guild* had taken on²¹⁸.

Whatever the truth of the matter, the view of Maisie Ward and her supporters was accepted. First in 1919 the *CEG* established the training scheme mentioned above. The methods it proposed were not entirely new; Lister Drummond and the *Ransomers* had instituted training for speakers in the pre-War years. However, the *CEG's* new training system ‘greatly elaborated’ on them²¹⁹. Then in Redwood’s final year as Master, 1919-1920, there took place the partial re-drafting of the *Guild* constitution, which led directly to the aforementioned professionalisation of the training system and the great expansion of the following year²²⁰. The successful outcome of the debate over training was probably the key moment of the *Catholic Evidence Guild's* early history, since by it the *Guild* speaker was converted from an individual witness for the faith into part of an instrument for systematically delivering Catholic doctrine to people who would never willingly have entered a church. Through this shift, the *CEG* became something greater than the sum of its members, and took on a life of its own. It came to know its identity. The credit for this discovery can fairly be given to Maisie Ward and her allies within the *Guild*.

2.4.3. Catholic Evidence and Whisky

The third controversy also involved the *CEG's* founder. The issue was much less important in the long run, but it caused great trouble at the time. In the USA, January 1920 ushered in the era of ‘Prohibition’. Vernon Redwood came from a brewing family in New Zealand, and he had been manager of a brewing business in Australia. In Britain the brewers started up a group called the *Fellowship of Freedom and Reform*, and funded it to campaign against prohibition, which they feared might spread across the Atlantic. Redwood was one

of its co-founders, and became its organising director²²¹. Frank Sheed records the concern of the *Guild* that Redwood ‘saw the two societies too much as one thing’²²². Redwood was ‘convinced that Prohibition was anti-Christian’, and held the *Fellowship* ‘to be a crusade in the same way as the *CEG*’.²²³ Like the *CEG*, the *Fellowship*’s members spoke on the platform in public places, and for this – unlike the *CEG* – they were remunerated²²⁴. As well as speaking for the *Fellowship* himself, Redwood attracted other prominent *Guild* members to lecture on *Fellowship* platforms²²⁵. Maisie Ward records the fear that one of these *Fellowship* men might be elected as Master at the elections in 1921, through the votes of the associate members who were ‘almost 100% behind Mr Redwood’²²⁶. However, the Cardinal, who was well informed about what was going on, guarded against the possibility by changing the rules a week before the elections, so that only active members could vote²²⁷. This was a decisive coup. However, individual *Guild* speakers continued to speak for the *Fellowship*. The matter, which had been ‘long discussed’, was brought to a head in November 1923, when the *Catholic Herald* published an article *Catholic Evidence and Whisky*. As recorded in the *CEG* Minute book, the piece ‘accused the *Guild* of allowing certain members to speak on their platforms who also spoke on other platforms which (...) were incompatible with the aims of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*’²²⁸. Worse still, the *Protestant Alliance* Magazine pounced on the story and published the *Catholic Herald* article. The Master – Frank Sheed at this time – wrote to the Cardinal requesting a ruling on the matter²²⁹. It would seem that none was forthcoming, because the controversy continued to ferment. One of the other speakers affected, John Seymour Jonas, defended Redwood’s actions to the *CEG* Council, and declared that until the Cardinal ruled on the matter, they would both continue to speak from the *Fellowship*’s platform²³⁰. George Coldwell, who was also involved²³¹, successfully sued the editor of the *Catholic Herald*, and its publishing company, for libel over its *Catholic Evidence and Whisky* article²³². Sheed then received a complaint from a priest who had heard Redwood speaking on prohibition from the *CEG*’s own platform in Hyde Park, which was a clear breach of the *Guild* rules. Sheed did no more than warn Redwood that he should restrict his lectures to the purposes of the *Guild* when speaking on its platforms²³³. However, with time Redwood began to restrict himself to the activities of the *Fellowship* – which was what some *Guild* members had wished from the outset –²³⁴ and thus the issue ceased to be important. This sharp contention probably did more than anything else to persuade the *CEG* and its founder to go their separate ways²³⁵.

Coldwell and Jonas, on the other hand, continued to lecture on behalf of the *Guild* for decades. Prohibition itself ceased to be an issue in December 1933, when it was repealed in the USA.

2.4.4. Social Issues

Redwood was also involved in a fourth defining controversy, which was kindled into life by the General Strike of May 1926. The question hinged on the wording or – according to some – the interpretation of a clause in the *Guild*'s constitution. An early draft of the original constitution had stated baldly: 'Politics are to be avoided'²³⁶. In the revised constitution the restriction on platform speakers was extended further to cover 'lines of argument, or of treatment of their subjects, or any matter to which any Catholic may legitimately take exception'²³⁷. Included among the 'Rules and Prohibitions' were the following prohibitions:

- (x). Politics, party or national, shall be avoided, and also;
- (xi). The detailed treatment of social questions. (Note: the *CEG* deals with social questions only so far as the fundamental principles of Morality and Revelation are directly affected by them; while the detailed application of these principles to social questions is the special province of the *Catholic Social Guild* and its limits must be strictly respected)²³⁸.

This restriction was generally accepted over the first few years of the life of the *CEG*. In May 1923 it was invoked as a potential reason for not sending speakers to lecture meetings organised by the *Ransomers*²³⁹. However, the General Strike created tensions within the membership, as it did within English Catholicism²⁴⁰. Shortly afterwards, in July 1926, Redwood submitted a proposal to the *Guild* Council that would have legitimised discussion of social questions by the speaker on the platform. Although this proposal was limited to teaching the principles only, it was rejected²⁴¹. The reasons advanced for this policy at the meeting were several, but three stood out.

Firstly, because of difficulties with the transmission. There would not be 'sufficient agreement among [the members of the *Guild*] to enable [them] to teach effectively'²⁴².

Secondly, because of difficulties on the platform. It would be impossible to keep the discussion on the level of principles only, because the crowd would move onto examples. 'And the crowd could raise great difficulties, e.g. the Church owning slaves in the middle ages, or Usury. Such requests would

divide a crowd on a new basis – political as well as religious. They would find confirmation for their suspicion that the Church is a political body²⁴³.

Thirdly, because of difficulties within the *Guild*. There was an obvious lack of unity in social questions as had been shown by the ‘certain strain put upon the social life of the *Guild* in the recent strike’. It was argued that ‘to introduce the discussion of social subjects would rend the *Guild* apart’²⁴⁴.

According to Maisie Ward, writing long afterwards, there was a deeper reason for ‘leaving social subjects alone. If they came in they would push the great dogmas further and further out’²⁴⁵. The question was not resolved immediately. In March 1927 the Master had to write to John Seymour Jonas and require him to sign an undertaking (drafted by the Executive) ‘to cease giving lectures on social subjects’²⁴⁶. In July 1928 Jonas and Redwood ‘gave notice’ that they intended ‘to present a resolution asking H.E.’s [the Cardinal’s] ruling on whether *Guild* members may speak on specified social subjects on the outdoor platform’²⁴⁷. However, no further mention of it appears in the records. In August 1931, the Minutes record that ‘a letter from a member of the *Guild* which recently appeared in *The Universe* on the subject of lectures on social subjects was discussed’²⁴⁸. No official action was taken. It was decided that the Master – Maurice Gravenor Hewins – should use his discretion in mentioning the matter to the unnamed speaker concerned. Eventually the rule seems to have been accepted as memories of the General Strike faded. In 1940 a correspondence in the columns of the *Catholic Herald* led two past Masters of the *Guild* to write in, defending the policy of not dealing with social questions: although it was clearly ‘essential that the Social Teaching of the Church should be broadcast far and wide’, it was ‘not the job of the *CEG*’; the ‘competent’ organisation for the job was the *Catholic Social Guild*²⁴⁹. The consequence of this prohibition was that the *Catholic Evidence Guild*, avoiding social questions, confined itself to the central doctrinal teachings of the Church – what Maisie Ward had called ‘the great dogmas’²⁵⁰.

2.5. *The Spiritual Life of the Guild*

In his 1926 booklet, ‘*The Catholic Evidence Guild*’, Frank Sheed writes that ‘The Lecturer’s remote preparation for a meeting should be the whole of his life. If a man is to speak for an hour in any day it should be his aim to pray at least as much’²⁵¹. The need for a strong spiritual life was acknowledged from the start, since the success of the *Guild* ‘depended to such an extent on the personal sanc-

tity of its members'²⁵². The original 1918 constitutions put together under the Mastership of Vernon Redwood counselled that members should 'make a Daily Practice of: 1. Receiving the Blessed Sacrament 2. Hearing Holy Mass, or 3. Reciting the Rosary. They should also read daily some portion of the Scriptures'²⁵³.

In addition to the above 'Counsels', an early draft of the constitution recommended members, 'to become associates of pious sodalities such as Tertiaries, KBS, St Vincent de Paul Society'²⁵⁴. However, soon the *Guild* acquired a spirit of its own, and rather than joining other associations members were counselled to foster devotion to the Holy Spirit, to the Blessed Sacrament, and to the English Martyrs, 'so many of whom died in defence of the Blessed Eucharist'²⁵⁵. The final recommendations appear in the revised *Guild* constitution, in the section dedicated to the 'Spiritual Life':

- i. Devotion to the Holy Ghost.
- ii. As far as possible, daily Mass and Communion.
- iii. As far as possible, daily Reading of the Scriptures.
- iv. Devotion to our Patrons.
- v. Monthly retreats (held on the first Saturday afternoon of month which Active Members are particularly exhorted to attend as often as possible).
- vi. The monthly general Mass and Communion on the Friday before the first Saturday of the Month. This Mass shall be the Votive Mass of the Holy Ghost (de Spiritu Sancto) or the Votive Mass for the Propagation of the Faith (Pro Fidei Propagatione) when the Rubrics permit.
- vii. The Mass on the Sunday within the octave of SS. Peter and Paul offered for all Members of the Guild.
- viii. The General Retreat, which the Guild undertakes to arrange once in each year for both men and women of the Guild – it is essential that the Active Members of the Guild join this retreat, or if unable to do so that at least they shall make a Retreat, privately, once a year²⁵⁶.

The spiritual life of the *Guild* was rounded out, by a few other corporate devotions and practices. The *CEG* was consecrated to Our Lady on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1920²⁵⁷. The ceremony of solemn dedication took place in Westminster Cathedral, and was presided over by Cardinal Bourne, after which the newly blessed statue was carried in procession from the cathedral and placed in the *Guild* Hut²⁵⁸. All meetings were 'opened with the following prayers: Our Father, Hail Mary, Gloria, Come, Holy Spirit; and closed with the Apostles' Creed'²⁵⁹. Indulgences were attached to member-

ship²⁶⁰. There also existed a scheme of corporate adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Any member ‘offering up half-an-hour’s prayer spent at any time before the Blessed Sacrament for the *Guild*’ would record the fact by putting a ‘paper into a box’. The figures were added monthly and the total was reported in *The Catholic Gazette*. Sometimes, within its pages, members were ‘asked to offer up their adoration for some special need’, such as ‘the increase of speakers’²⁶¹.

The General Retreat was an *inter-Guild* event, attended by *CEG* members from all over the country. It was held on the long weekend of Whitsunday (Pentecost), and lasted three days²⁶². The usual venue was the Convent of the Cenacle at Grayshott, on the Surrey/Hampshire border about 45 miles southwest of London²⁶³.

From organising retreats for its members, it was a small step for the *Catholic Evidence Guild* to start organising retreats for the general public – naturally, from the platform. In 1923 the Master of the *Guild*, Frank Sheed, proposed ‘an open air retreat to be given in Hyde Park during Holy Week’²⁶⁴. It was adjudged a great success, ‘judging from the crowds that attended’²⁶⁵. In 1924 the experiment was accordingly repeated, only this time on a grander scale. The Holy Week retreat – which, logically, given the aims of the *CEG*, was aimed at ‘non-Catholics’ – was given by Abbot Butler²⁶⁶ and six other preachers, including Fr Ronald Knox. Fr Vincent McNabb led the Stations of the Cross on the Friday afternoon. The Secretary’s Report states that ‘the whole retreat and particularly the Stations of the Cross attracted very large crowds throughout, much larger than last year’²⁶⁷.

The ‘Holy Week mission’ became one of the most important events of the *CEG*’s calendar, and also one of the most popular²⁶⁸. On the Good Friday the *Guild* speakers would hold aloft some very large Stations of the Cross ‘on one platform, while the preacher spoke from the other’²⁶⁹. One year the police estimated that 5,000 people attended the hour and a half-long event in Hyde Park, which Fr McNabb led every year ‘down to his death’²⁷⁰. Eventually the event spread beyond the Park, and the Good Friday Stations of the Cross came to be held at several sites in and around London²⁷¹.

2.6. *Hazards*

In his memoir, *The Church and I*, written after ‘half a century of speaking under the open sky’²⁷², Frank Sheed wrote that he went to his first speaking appointment – an open air platform in Highbury – ‘praying that rain might wash

out the meeting'. His prayers were not answered; instead, fog prevented other Squad members from arriving, thus increasing his share of the speaking²⁷³. The story highlights an important practical aspect of the open air lecture work: its unpredictability. Various kinds of *hazard* could cause the disruption of an event or even its cancellation. Such hazards ranged in kind from interruption by unfriendly officialdom²⁷⁴, to something as mundane as the presence of roadworks on the site of the pitch²⁷⁵. The most common hazard, although not the most unpleasant, was the capricious English climate. Although speakers would try to proceed with a programmed meeting 'even though torrential rain fell'²⁷⁶, exceptionally bad weather could, and sometimes did, cause the cancellation of an outdoor meeting²⁷⁷. Alternatively, it might deter some lecturers from turning out to speak²⁷⁸. To judge from the regular figures collated by the Outdoor Committee for the *Guild Council*, it seems that, even in the depths of winter, a high proportion of outdoor meetings proceeded as planned²⁷⁹. On at least one occasion the number of speeches delivered in the period December to February was fully equal to that over the preceding period²⁸⁰. But dreary weather was not the worst of the trials which *CEG* speakers had to endure²⁸¹. The podium could be a precarious place at the best of times. Sheed himself once accidentally terminated his own participation in a meeting in Hyde Park by falling off the platform and being knocked unconscious²⁸². However, the biggest challenge came from within the crowd. Genuine questioners were of course welcome. Individual hecklers who were 'out for fun' were a manageable hazard, and most of them posed little problem. There are many accounts of hecklers in the published literature²⁸³. The *Guild* cautioned inexperienced lecturers against the temptation of making friends with them; 'it was felt to be very undesirable'²⁸⁴. But with skill, the speaker could turn the presence of a heckler to his or her advantage, for the amusement of the crowd as well as the person on the podium²⁸⁵.

However, with organised opposition the situation was otherwise. Such protests were invariably spearheaded by 'members of certain violent No Popery groups, of whose existence the ordinary Protestant knew nothing'. They would heckle the speaker 'about the bloodstained history of the Church', and the misbehaviour 'of Popes and priests and nuns'²⁸⁶. The lecturer would be interrupted with shouts of 'North, South, East and West', as he or she made the sign of the Cross, and 'unpleasant language, especially on the subjects of the Blessed Virgin and the Eucharist'²⁸⁷. These hecklers were 'paid for their performances'²⁸⁸. Such people were capable of ruining an outdoor meeting²⁸⁹.

One heckler at Sheed's meetings used to stand in front of the podium 'facing the crowd' and tell them of the 'abominable crimes' for which – he said – the speaker had been imprisoned²⁹⁰. Another heckler was so 'uproarious' and effective that the *Guild* felt it had no choice other than to prosecute him²⁹¹. Such organised opposition also meant that it became 'difficult to put up new lecturers at old established pitches', and the problem had to be tackled by 'devising a scheme of travelling platforms' so that inexperienced speakers could 'learn to handle their material without having to face an opposition known to be too much for them'²⁹². If such hecklers were handled badly, or there were several acting in concert, rowdy behaviour could ensue. It was reported that when early members of the *Catholic Evidence Guild* first began to speak in Hyde Park in August 1918, the Kensitites, who were also active there, reacted²⁹³:

Rushes were made and repelled, and then a notice was insidiously sent to the Police authorities that the Papists were causing disturbance and threatening bloodshed. Detectives from Scotland Yard were sent, but they soon found out the facts, and reported favourably of Mr Redwood and his colleagues. (...) On one occasion a troublesome Kensitite was brought up by the Police and heavily fined for brawling²⁹⁴.

Some pitches developed a reputation for being 'difficult'. During the late twenties and early thirties organised opposition was reported at Tufnell Park²⁹⁵, Hampstead and Kilburn²⁹⁶, Wood Green²⁹⁷ Bumpus Corner²⁹⁸, Victoria Park and Whitechapel²⁹⁹. Vernon Redwood, a commanding presence who 'sometimes attracted a crowd of 1,000 around a platform'³⁰⁰, was once forced off the platform at Ware, Hertfordshire, his glasses broken by members of the irate crowd³⁰¹. On another occasion the crowd took the side of the lecturer, and 'ducked in the pond a heckler at Hampstead' who was over-aggressive toward the speaker, who was the Dominican priest Fr Vincent McNabb³⁰². If rowdiness in the crowd rose to a sufficient level, the police might close the meeting. In August 1928 it was reported that 'a policeman had recently been suspended for unwarrantably interfering at one of the pitches'³⁰³. Presumably on that occasion there had been no rowdiness. However, on several occasions in the spring and summer of 1930 the police became involved legitimately, probably as a result of the tactics of the 'opposition'. A meeting at Crouch End in the March was closed 'on account of the noise', and the Minutes show that the *Guild* was considering 'legal action'³⁰⁴. The *Guild's* 'adoration intention' that month was 'for the overcoming of organised opposition'³⁰⁵. In July 'it was

reported that there had been some trouble with the Hampstead police³⁰⁶. At the end of the month the police were called out – ‘once again’, it was said – in Hyde Park on a Saturday evening³⁰⁷. Faced with these tactics from the ‘organised opposition’, *Guild* members were instructed that ‘under no circumstances are the police to be called in’³⁰⁸. With the passage of time the decline of the anti-Catholic groups meant that organised opposition to *Guild* speakers virtually ceased.

One of the most celebrated of the *Guild*’s hecklers – if the term may properly be applied to him, for it is evident that he was a courteous and respected adversary – was Edward Siderman, an Orthodox Jew who was a regular questioner of the *CEG* lecturers at the pitch in Hyde Park for four decades. He greatly admired Fr Vincent McNabb, with whom he debated at the latter’s Sunday afternoon meetings over a period of twenty-five years. After the death of Fr McNabb in 1943, Siderman wrote a touching collection of memories of the Dominican friar in his open-air pulpit, reproducing his words ‘with remarkable accuracy’³⁰⁹. Frank Sheed, who claimed to ‘have done battle with Siderman almost as often as he and Fr Vincent’, wrote that arguing with Siderman was ‘just about the most strenuous mental combat there is (...) he has the rare gift of hearing what the speaker actually says: with his head on one side he considers it, darting his mind in and out of it, searching for flaws. Then he states his objections lucidly, forcing the speaker back invariably to the point where the mystery is at its darkest’³¹⁰. There was no question of Siderman becoming a Catholic, but he admitted that the *CEG* speakers ‘got him back to the synagogue’³¹¹. His memoir paints a vivid picture of the charismatic Dominican friar and the meetings in Hyde Park over the period of their unusual friendship³¹².

2.7. *Conversion Stories*

In her memoirs Maisie Ward relates that the work of the *Guild* soon began to produce gratifying – and unanticipated – results. Lapsed Catholics attending the Wednesday evening lectures returned to the sacraments; ‘marriages were put right, children baptized. (...) Badly instructed Catholics grew fervent as they learned more about their faith’³¹³. She continues:

We did not count results; it was suggested that the Guild start a magazine to record progress, but this was voted down on the ground that studying and

lecturing absorbed all the spare time at our disposal. As one girl put it, 'I go to the class two nights a week and speak three. I must have two left to see my friends and keep my clothes tidy'³¹⁴.

But although the *Guild* refused to keep records of its results in this sphere, meaning that most of them will never be known, anecdotal evidence cited by Maisie Ward suggests that its activities contributed to many conversions: 'Half a dozen persistent hecklers at Tower Hill came into the Church, and two are now Cistercian monks – conversions chiefly due to one speaker whose ability and knowledge are matched by great sacrifices for the work's sake'³¹⁵. Maisie Ward relates the story of an 'atheist heckler in London' who 'attacked us for two years' before becoming a Catholic. He 'converted his mother and his brother and himself became a speaker'³¹⁶. Another atheist in Leicester heckled the *Guild* speakers for four years, converted to Catholicism and then 'became a priest'³¹⁷. The Little Sisters of the Poor 'told us of a dying man sending his child to call them as he had listened in Hyde Park and wanted to die a Catholic'³¹⁸. *Guild* members heard from 'a priest in Hampstead of husband and wife coming to him, unknown to one another, from two different pitches and asking for instruction'³¹⁹. They heard of 'a questioner of forty years back who is now a monsignor'³²⁰.

To these accounts should be added the aforementioned testimony of Edward Siderman that the *Guild* had 'got him back to the synagogue', and of the persistent questioner who wrote to Frank Sheed, 'You may be disappointed when I tell you that I am not going to join your Church, but I want you to know that you have given me back my belief in God and my belief in Christ'. Sheed was 'not disappointed'³²¹. As Maisie Ward claimed, the open air lecturers of the *Catholic Evidence Guild* aimed to be 'eirenical to a degree almost unheard of then in religious discussion'; on the platform they learned to practise ecumenism *avant la lettre*³²².

2.8. Frank Sheed

The best known organiser of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*, and possibly its greatest speaker (although there are several other contenders for that honour, most notably Maisie Ward), was the writer Frank Sheed (1897-1981)³²³. Like the *CEG's* founder, Vernon Redwood, Sheed was from the Antipodes. As he describes in his autobiographical memoir, *The Church and I*, he decided to

take a year's break from Law School³²⁴, and left Sydney for London, where he arrived in November 1920³²⁵. A fortnight after his arrival he attended his first *Guild* meeting, which was led by John Seymour Jonas³²⁶, and was entranced by the atmosphere³²⁷. He later wrote, 'all that I have done in the fifty-three years since bears the mark of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*; some of it would be incomprehensible without the refashioning my whole self underwent in it'³²⁸. He quickly established himself as a regular speaker on its platforms. Instead of the planned year in London, he stayed four³²⁹. Since the change of plan meant that he had to support himself, and *Guild* speakers were not paid for their efforts, he took a job at the *Catholic Truth Society*³³⁰. Sheed was elected to the Council of the *Catholic Evidence Guild* on 18 November 1921, as Assistant Secretary; ten days later he was co-opted onto the Executive³³¹. His multiple abilities, as speaker, trainer, and organiser, were soon recognised, and in the November 1922 elections he was elected as Master unopposed, following Mark Symons's resignation at the end of his statutory two years at the helm³³². As has been shown above, the *Catholic Evidence Guild* was already in good shape by late 1922; it had a defined management structure, an expanding membership, a developed training scheme for intending speakers, and it was running plenty of open air lecture meetings each week in London; the work had spread to '30 meetings weekly, of a total duration of 80 hours'³³³. However, it is undeniable that Sheed's leadership had a galvanising effect on the *Guild*³³⁴. Comments conserved in the *CEG's* own minutes book testify that his energy and ability – and above all the time he invested in the work of developing the *Guild* – were noticed at the time³³⁵.

Sheed had clear ideas about the nature and purpose of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*. As he wrote in 1926, 'the constitution and the training system are both there, that the platforms may be occupied, and the spiritual life is there that they may be occupied by men worthy of their calling. Certainly neither elegance of constitution, nor soundness of theology, nor personal sanctity could excuse the *Guild* if it failed in its proper work – which is the mass-production of competent outdoor exponents of Catholicism; if it fails here, then it has no further excuse for existence'³³⁶. This preparation had to be done in common: 'the great fact of *Guild* life – without which the knowledge of the crowd could not easily be imparted – is the pooling of ideas. There is no such thing as copyright. Here, if nowhere else, plagiarism is a virtue, and the common ownership of goods in the early Church was not more real than the common ownership of ideas in the *Guild*'³³⁷.

Sheed, like Maisie Ward, was heavily involved in the work of the Practical Training Committee. Together they compiled – and she edited – a new set of *Catholic Evidence Training Outlines*³³⁸. Published in 1925, with a glowing foreword by Cardinal Bourne, this book of 288 pages superseded the less developed *General Course of Lectures* which had been published within the body of the *Handbook*³³⁹. The *Outlines* were reprinted in 1926; a revised edition was published in 1928, which was reprinted twice again in 1929. This edition consisted of an introductory essay entitled ‘The Problem of Guild Training’, lectures on such themes as ‘General Outlook of a Catholic Street-Corner Apologist’, ‘How to Develop your Ideas’, and ‘How to Handle a Crowd’, followed by twenty-four outlines for junior speakers and forty-two outlines for senior speakers. In 1934 a new expanded third edition of the *Outlines* was published; it contained thirteen new lectures, while other outlines had been so changed that they were ‘practically new’³⁴⁰. This edition went to press a second time that same year (1934), then in 1935 and 1938. The fourth edition of 1939 differed from the third only by the addition of a new final section, called ‘General Survey’, which discusses and compares different ways of teaching some of the main doctrines. This edition was reprinted in 1943, again in 1948 and once more in 1954. Finally, in 1967 Frank Sheed published another completely revised version of the *Outlines*, this time for general use, with the new title, *Faith Comes by Hearing*³⁴¹. The book was reissued in 1980. Also relevant in this connection is *Theology and Sanity*, first published in 1947, which Sheed claimed to have written ‘as an elementary manual for laymen who accepted the call-up; it was minimum equipment, basic training’³⁴².

The purpose of the *Training Outlines* was to produce speakers for the outdoor platform. Under Sheed’s influence more controls were introduced to ensure that speakers performed to the required levels. Speakers worked within a system of squads, each headed by a leader who reported to the Outdoor Committee. If a lecturer turned out not to reach the standard needed, he or she would be requested to step down until he attained it³⁴³. The squad leader also decided when a speaker in his or her charge was ready to take the test that would potentially lead to the granting of a licence to lecture³⁴⁴. Even after a license was granted, all speakers were required to take regular tests or else face the prospect of having their licence withdrawn; this meant that all the *Guild*’s active speakers as recorded in the annual figures had taken at least one exam that same year, except for the few holders of the General Licence³⁴⁵. These

measures did not slow the expansion of the *Guild*: by 1926 Sheed could write that there were '120 speakers (80 men and 40 women) holding 40 meetings a week, delivering altogether about 450 speeches a month'³⁴⁶. This represented a growth in activity of between 30 and 40 percent in fewer than four years. 'In Hyde Park' – he continued – 'meetings are held every night except Tuesday, and on Sunday the meeting lasts for eleven hours, during which time the crowd averages about 500. In the rest of England there are between 20 and 30 *Guilds*, some very strong (...) No member of any *Guild* receives any payment for the work'³⁴⁷.

It was a rule of the Westminster *CEG* that the Master could serve for only two consecutive years, and several people served as Master during the 1920s and 1930s; but Sheed was the dominant figure throughout. Having been elected Master in 1922, he stepped down at the end of 1924, and returned to Sydney to finish the two remaining years of his Law degree, which he managed to complete in only one year; while there he also founded the Australian branch of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*³⁴⁸. In his absence the academic Alfred Leslie Squire was elected as Master for one year (1924-25); he was succeeded by the barrister Maurice Gravenor Hewins (1925-27). In 1926, in the time of Hewins's mastership, Sheed founded the publishing house Sheed and Ward, originally with Maisie Ward's brother, Leo Ward. He was also Vice-Master of the *Guild* (1926-27).

At that time the Hut was demolished, and the *CEG* moved to St Peter's Diocesan Hall, which had been built within the Cathedral precincts especially for the *Guild*. The Council sent a message of 'deep gratitude' to the Cardinal 'for the headquarters' he had 'so generously provided'³⁴⁹. Also that year, Sheed and Maisie Ward got married.

After Sheed's second period as Master (1927-29), Hewins took over again (1929-31) and then the councillor Maurice Burns (1931-33). In 1933 Sheed was in the USA, founding the American publishing house Sheed and Ward Inc. Burns was followed as Master by – once again – Hewins (1933-35) and Sheed (1935-36). Sheed was succeeded by the banking clerk Ronald Flaxman (1936-38)³⁵⁰. In November 1938 Sheed was Master once again, and, since war in Europe was becoming ever more likely, he undertook to write to the Cardinal asking 'that he confirm all the officers of the *Guild* in the posts they held until such time as it would be possible for the *Guild* to reform'³⁵¹. Upon the declaration of war in September 1939, all activities of the Westminster *CEG* were suspended³⁵².

2.9. *Conclusions*

The Westminster *Catholic Evidence Guild* between the two World Wars was a serious, professionally run operation, highly successful in terms of producing proficient open-air witnesses for the faith. In an age of outdoor speakers, the *Guild* was an efficient means for conveying Catholic teaching to the man on the street corner, which it did to a high standard of excellence.

Much of the credit for this organisation must go to many hundreds of relatively unknown people, as in any association. However, it is clear that both Maisie Ward and Frank Sheed were the dominant characters in the 1920s and 1930s. They and other *Guild* members were also involved in the Catholic Literary Revival, especially through the publishing house *Sheed & Ward* Ltd. Indeed, written apologetics in England at this time cannot be fully appreciated without an awareness that much of it was written with the *CEG* and its work at least partly in mind.

Notes

1. H. VAUGHAN, «England's Conversion by the Power of Prayer», in *Papers Read at the Catholic Truth Society's Annual Conference*, W.H. Cologan and J. Britten (ed.), London, 1890, p. 104.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.
8. Herbert Vaughan (1832-1903), co-founder and first President of the revived *Catholic Truth Society* (1884-1903) was Bishop of Salford (1872-1892), Archbishop of Westminster from 1892 and Cardinal from 1893. He founded the Mill Hill Missionaries in 1866. He was also founder of the original *Catholic Truth Society* in 1868. While at Salford he founded St Bede's College, Manchester. Westminster Cathedral was begun during his tenure, and was nearly completed by the time of his death. Several biographies exist. Cfr. for example J.G. SNEAD-COX, *Cardinal Vaughan*, London, 1910; A. McCORMACK, *Cardinal Vaughan*, London, 1966.
9. James Britten (1846-1924), co-founder of the revived *Catholic Truth Society* (1884-1922), was a convert to Catholicism at the age of twenty-one. The main work of his life was running the CTS. However, he had a parallel career as a Botanist and author. In 1871 he joined the Botanical Department of the British Museum where he eventually became Senior Assistant, retiring in 1909. He was, from 1880 until his death, Editor of *The Journal of Botany*. Cfr. «Obituary, James Britten», *The Times* (10 October 1924) 15. Cfr. also «Britten, James», in *The Catholic Who's Who and Year Book*, 17th ed., London, 1924, pp. 46-47. He was also a founder member of the *Folklore Society* and the *English Dialect Society*.
10. «James Britten to Fr. Walter Elliott, 25 December 1891», in *The convention of the Apostolate of the Press: held in Columbus Hall, New York City, January 6th and 7th, 1892, Report of papers and letters* (1892), W. ELLIOTT (ed.), New York, 1892, p. 72; the letter is printed in full on pp. 71-76 of the publication.
11. For more on this, cfr. «Prospectus of the 'Catholic Truth Society'», *Dublin Review*, 11:22 (October 1868) 545-546.
12. «James Britten to Fr. Walter Elliott», pp. 71-72. A summarised version of this account, also written by Britten, appears in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Cfr. J. BRITTEN and T.F. MEEHAN, «Truth Societies, Catholic», in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, C. HERBERMANN (ed.), XV, New York, 1912, 77. The 'circumstances' referred to arose through the appointment of Herbert Vaughan as Bishop of Salford in 1872, which forced him to concentrate his efforts on running the diocese to the exclusion of other projects. Other accounts by Britten include J. BRITTEN, «The Catholic Truth Society», *Dublin Review*, 17:2 (April 1887) 400-401; 408-410; as well as F. GASQUET and J. BRITTEN, *The Catholic Truth Society*, London, 1909, pp.

- 14-18. An allusion appears also in J. BRITTEN, «Catholic Popular Literature», *The Month* (London), 57 (1886) 29-30. However, it was not just the name which was revived: the new *Society* took over the stock of the old, as well as reprinting some of its literature. Hence the old *Society* can be said to have been incorporated in the new, and the CTS has two dates of foundation.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 73. These four points are 'a condensed form' of the prospectus, which Britten then goes on to quote in full.
 14. MCCORMACK, *Cardinal Vaughan*, p. 217.
 15. «James Britten to Fr. Walter Elliott», p. 72.
 16. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 74.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
 19. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
 20. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 74.
 21. «Obituary, James Britten», *The Times* (10 October 1924) 15. About 60,000 copies of the booklet had been sold by that time, cfr. «Britten, James», in *The Catholic Who's Who and Year Book*, 17th ed., London, 1924, p. 47.
 22. Cfr. BRITTEN and MEEHAN, «Truth Societies, Catholic», 78.
 23. G. STEBBING, *The Position and Prospects of the Catholic Church in English Speaking Lands*, London, 1930, p. 209.
 24. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
 25. GASQUET and BRITTEN, *The Catholic Truth Society*, p. 21. Britten states that the CTS of Ireland at that date had already achieved 'a methodical diffusion of literature' within Ireland surpassing 'in extent' that which the parent organisation had 'compassed in England'. In 1969 the name of the Irish *Society* was changed to *Veritas*.
 26. Cfr. C. RALLS, *The Catholic Truth Society. A New History*, London, 1993, p. 5.
 27. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 23-26. It is not possible to arrive at an exact figure of pamphlets sold; a little under 9 million is the minimum estimate. Cfr. F. GASQUET and J. BRITTEN, *The Catholic Truth Society*, London, 1909, pp. 23-26.
 28. Cfr. BRITTEN and MEEHAN, «Truth Societies, Catholic», 78. Cfr. also «James Britten to Fr. Walter Elliott», p. 72.
 29. Cfr. RALLS, *The Catholic Truth Society. A New History*, p. 10.
 30. S.F. SMITH, «The Norwich Catholic Congress», *The Month* (London), 120 (1912) 237.
 31. ANON., *The C.T.S. and its Work*, London, 1922, p. 6. The pamphlet was printed as part of the so-called 'Forward Movement'. If this estimate is correct, both increase and slump must have been 'decided'. In 1923 the figure was only about 560,000. Cfr. G.E. ANSTRUTHER and P.E. HALLETT, *Catholic Truth Society. The First Fifty Years*, London, 1934, p. 2.
 32. George Elliot Anstruther (1870-1940), Organising Secretary of the CTS (1909-1920) was a journalist. He was Editor of *The Universe* (1906-1909) and Assistant Editor of *The Tablet* (1920-1936). He was also Honorary Secretary of the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom*, and wrote a biography of its co-founder, Fr Philip Fletcher. Other works include a life of William Hogarth (1902) and several CTS Booklets, including a brief biography of Caroline Chisholm. Cfr. «Anstruther, George Elliot», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 33rd ed., London, 1940, p. 8. Cfr. also «Anstruther, George Elliot», in *Who was Who*, III (1929-1940), London, 1960, p. 30.
 33. Cfr. «Anstruther, George Elliot», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 33rd ed., London, 1940, p. 8. Anstruther was active as a platform speaker for the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom*, as mentioned below.
 34. ANSTRUTHER and HALLETT, *Catholic Truth Society. The First Fifty Years*, pp. 12-13.
 35. Fr Philip Fletcher (1848-1928), co-founder and first Master of the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom*, the fifth son of Sir Henry Fletcher (3rd Baronet of Clea Hall, Cumberland). Educated at Exeter College, Oxford, he was later Anglican curate at St Bartholomew's, Brighton. He

- was received into the Church in 1878 and ordained in 1882. Cfr. «Fletcher, Rev. Philip, K.C.H.S.», in *The Catholic Who's Who and Year Book*, 21st ed., London, 1928, p. 173. The great work of his life was the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom*, which continues today. Cfr. P. FLETCHER, *Recollections of a Ransomer*, London, 1928, and G.E. ANSTRUTHER, *Fr. Philip Fletcher (1848-1928)*, London, 1936.
36. Cfr. «Fletcher, Rev. Philip, K.C.H.S.», in *The Catholic Who's Who and Year Book*, 21st ed., London, 1928, p. 173.
 37. Lister Maurice Drummond (1856-1916), co-founder and first Secretary of the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom*, was a barrister. Cfr. W. GORDON GORMAN, *Converts to Rome*, London, 1899, pp. viii; 76-77. He converted to Catholicism in 1875. In 1892 he was appointed Secretary of the Evicted Irish Tenants' Commission. Cfr. «Drummond, Lister», in *The Catholic Who's Who and Year Book*, 9th ed., London, 1916, p. 133. He was one of the first members of the committee of the revived *Catholic Truth Society*. Cfr. C. COLLINGWOOD, *The Catholic Truth Society*, 1969, p. 3. From 1912 he was a stipendiary magistrate (i.e., district judge) in London. Cfr. H. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement: Its Achievements and its Hopes*, London, 1921, p. 8.
 38. Cfr. VAUGHAN, «England's Conversion by the Power of Prayer», p. 124.
 39. H. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement: Its Achievements and its Hopes*, London, 1921, p. 2.
 40. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 3. The commemoration on 4 May had been instituted by Leo XIII for the fifty-four martyrs whom he beatified in 1886, as mentioned above. A further nine martyrs were beatified in 1895, and another 136 in 1929.
 41. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 3. For a detailed description of one such event in the mid-twentieth century, cfr. «5,000 Honour Martyrs at Tyburn», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 5 May 1950, 8. The *Guild* organised the Tyburn Procession for the final time in April 2001, although members of the *Guild* still walk the route informally.
 42. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 6. Cfr. also M. SYMONS, «Our Work and its Origin», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (September 1921) 216, where the second Master of the *Catholic Evidence Guild* traces the start of Drummond's work to 1893. There is some evidence that Drummond first tried out his idea in Hastings, and only later (i.e. in 1894) in Hyde Park, cfr. J.H. FILMER, «Notes for Ransomers», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 15 July 1938, 12. The date of 1891 claimed by B.L. Conway is too early, although it is correctly stated that Drummond appeared 'week after week' for eighteen years in Hyde Park, cfr. B.L. CONWAY, «The Catholic Evidence Movement», *Catholic World* (New York), 116 (January 1923) 494. Conway's article is a review of the aforementioned book by H. Browne.
 43. Adelaide Drummond (née Lister, 1827-1911) was the daughter of Thomas Lister (2nd Baron Ribblesdale) and step-daughter of Lord John Russell (later 1st Earl Russell), who was twice Prime Minister. She was raised as an Anglican, but later joined the Salvation Army (a religious and charitable organisation, fashioned along military lines, which split away from Methodism in 1878). Finally, in 1896 she followed her son into the Catholic Church. Cfr. B. CHAMPNEYS, *The Honourable Adelaide Drummond*, London, 1915.
 44. Cfr. FILMER, «Notes for Ransomers», 12. According to this article, Drummond was asked by his mother why, if his religion was 'the true one' as he claimed, he did not 'go out into the streets and preach about it', as she did about hers. The author of the piece, Mgr John Filmer, was the second Master of the *Guild*, succeeding Fr Philip Fletcher in the role in 1928.
 45. «His Pen was Blest. Tributes to a Great Journalist and a Great Man», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 29 March 1940, 1.
 46. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 7.
 47. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 8.
 48. «R.I.P. Mr Lister Drummond, K.S.G.», *The Missionary Gazette* (London), 7 (March 1916) 5.

49. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 2.
50. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 8.
51. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
52. STEBBING, *The Position and Prospects of the Catholic Church in English Speaking Lands*, p. 211.
53. Cfr. «James Britten to Fr. Walter Elliott», p. 74.
54. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 9.
55. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 10, which refers to the work beginning 'not long before the Norwich Congress'. The source of the information is cited as Mark Symons. The annual Catholic Congress took place in Norwich in 1912. Cfr. also SYMONS, «Our Work and its Origin», 216, in which the same person traces the start of the *Barrow Brigade* to 1910. The earlier date is less convincing in view of the aforementioned connection with the Norwich Congress. Cfr. also SMITH, «The Norwich Catholic Congress», 237, which refers to 'modes of combined action' between the *Catholic Reading Guild* and the CTS.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 10. Cfr. also CONWAY, «The Catholic Evidence Movement», 494.
57. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 10.
58. George Coldwell (1876-1958) was a second-hand bookseller, selling Catholic and other books from his shop in Red Lion Passage, Holborn, which after the war also housed the library of the *Catholic Reading Guild*. He was its second Secretary. He was a convert from non-conformism. Cfr. B. SEWELL, «An Outstanding Lay Apostle», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 14 November 1958, 7.
59. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, pp. 106-107. The book is G.E.J. COLDWELL, *The Catholic Platform. Seven Lectures Delivered in Finsbury Park*, London, 1916. Coldwell's delivery was direct and good-humoured. One of his banners bore the motto: 'Know Popery – and enjoy its blessings'.
60. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 10.
61. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 9, nt. Ambrose Willis (1885-1916) was founder and first Secretary of the *Catholic Reading Guild*, as well as founder of the *Barrow Brigade*. He was also Publishing Director of *The Tablet*, cfr. News report: «Director of Tablet Here», *Montreal Gazette*, 20 August 1913, 3; and also A.J. MILLER, «The Catholic Reading Guild», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 12 December 1958, 2. Cfr. also *Converts to Rome. A Biographical List of the More Notable Converts to the Catholic Church in the United Kingdom During the Last Sixty Years*, W. GORDON GORMAN (ed.), London, 1910, 296, *passim*; the entry refers to Ambrose Willis's mother, Mrs Alice Mary Willis, née Milner, but it also provides information about him.
62. Mark Lancelot Symons (1886-1935) was an artist of the Romantic school who achieved prominence in his lifetime. A biography was published by *Sheed & Ward*: S. WINES, *Mark Symons*, London, 1937.
63. Charles Rose Chase (1844-1909), first Superior (1903-1909) of the *Catholic Missionary Society* – then known as *Westminster Diocesan Missionaries* – had been an army captain before becoming Anglican Vicar of All Saint's, Plymouth. He became a Catholic, and in 1901 he was ordained. Cfr. «Chase, Rev. Charles Rose», in *The Catholic Who's Who and Year Book*, 1st ed., London, 1908, p. 70.
64. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 12.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
66. MCCORMACK, *Cardinal Vaughan*, p. 287.
67. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 287.
68. John Filmer (1869-1959), Master of the *Guild of Our Lady of Ransom* 1928-1951, was formerly Anglican Curate of St Margaret's, Roath, Cardiff. He was received into the Church in 1900 and ordained in 1902. Cfr. «Filmer, Rt. Rev. Mgr. John H.», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 149.
69. Thomas Byles (1870-1912) studied at Oxford, was converted to Catholicism from Congregationalism in 1894, and was ordained in 1902. Cfr. «In Memoriam», *The Missionary Gazette*

- (London), 3 (May 1912) 4-5. Cfr. D. SHANAHAN, «Fr. Thomas R.D. Byles, Parish Priest of Ongar and Hero of the Titanic», *Essex Recusant*, 17 (1975) 49.
70. John Arendzen (1873-1954) was born in Amsterdam into a Catholic family which emigrated to England when he was an infant. He was ordained in 1895, and obtained degrees from Bonn (PhD), Munich and Cambridge. He contributed to academic journals 'on biblical and textual studies'. His ability to express 'abstruse points' with 'clarity and simplicity' was put to good use in his work with the *Catholic Missionary Society* and the *Catholic Evidence Guild*. He wrote several books of apologetics. He was Spiritual Director at St Edmund's College, Ware, 1937-49. Cfr. «Obituary, Canon J. Arendzen», *The Times* (22 July 1954) 8. Cfr. also «Arendzen, Canon John», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, pp. 9-10.
 71. Herbert Vaughan (1874-1936) was ordained in 1900. He is not to be confused with his uncle, Cardinal Herbert Vaughan. He succeeded Fr Chase as second Superior of the *Catholic Missionary Society*, 1909-1933. He was also on the Committees of the CTS and the *Catholic Reading Guild*. Cfr. «Vaughan, Rev. Herbert, D.D.», in *The Catholic Who's Who and Year Book*, 27th ed., London, 1934, p. 494.
 72. Cfr. McCORMACK, *Cardinal Vaughan*, p. 287.
 73. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 287.
 74. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 14.
 75. *Ibidem*.
 76. *Ibid.*, p. 14. The motor chapel was first used in July 1911. Cfr. ANON., «The Motor Chapel Mission», *The Missionary Gazette* (London), 2 (August 1911) 4-9; also «The Catholic Missionary Society Motorchapel Tour», *The Tablet* (London), 2 September 1911, 25. The motor chapel was a popular innovation. It is said to have been an English adaptation of the chapel rail-road-car pioneered by the Paulists in America 'to bring the Mass to the new towns springing up at the side of the railroads'. Cfr. E.K. TAYLOR, «The Catholic Missionary Society», *The Clergy Review* (London), 43 (1958) 601. Cfr. also «CMS Cavalcade», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 43 (1952) 229; and T. HOLLAND, *For Better and For Worse. Memoirs of Bishop Thomas Holland*, Salford 1989, pp. 157-158.
 77. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
 78. Cfr. M. WARD and F.J. SHEED, *Catholic Evidence Training Outlines*, London, 1934, p. 6.
 79. M. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, London, 1964, p. 84.
 80. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 16, nt. *The Catholic Gazette* was the name of the CMS's magazine from 1 January 1918. It was founded on 1 January 1910 as *The Missionary Gazette*, of which there were 96 monthly issues in eight volumes up to the re-foundation.
 81. The missionaries noted that this was one of the most frequently asked questions over the years; cfr. also «CMS Cavalcade», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 43 (1952) 229.
 82. The basis of this question was that Catholics could not use the King James Bible, the standard English version, because it was Protestant in inspiration. It was a tricky question to handle, given the Patriotic sentiment attached to the King James Bible.
 83. «The Question Box», *The Missionary Gazette* (London), 1 (January 1910) 8-9.
 84. Cfr. «Vaughan, Rev. Herbert, D.D.», in *The Catholic Who's Who and Year Book*, 27th ed., London, 1934, p. 494.
 85. Cfr. «Opening of the Mission House», *The Missionary Gazette* (London), 1 (July 1910) 3-4.
 86. «General Meeting of Members and Associates. Report of the Proceedings», *The Missionary Gazette* (London), 5 (July 1914) 5. A map in the January issue shows that these missions had taken place in 69 locations in England and Wales. Cfr. *The Missionary Gazette* (London), 5 (January 1914) 11.
 87. Adding up the totals, twenty-six missions were announced in the twelve issues of *The Catholic Gazette* in 1921, cfr. *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (January-December 1921) 12; 36; 60; 84; 108; 132; 156; 180; 204; 232; 260 and 288.
 88. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 13.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
90. Francis Bourne (1861-1935), was Bishop of Southwark (1897-1903), Archbishop of Westminster from 1903 and Cardinal from 1911. He presided over a flowering of apologetical and missionary activity in England. Several biographies exist. Cfr. for example E. OLDMEADOW, *Francis Cardinal Bourne*, 2 vols., London, 1940-1944.
91. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 24 April 1918, Box 2, Archive of the *Catholic Evidence Guild* (ACEG), held in the Archives of the Archbishop of Westminster held at Westminster Diocesan Archives. The archive is divided into boxes. Box 2 consists of the Westminster *Guild's* first Minutes book, running from 24 April 1918 to 26 October 1920.
92. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 45. Henry Browne (1853-1941) was Professor of Greek at University College Dublin, 1908-1922, and founder of the Classical Museum in Dublin. Cfr. «Browne, Father Henry, S.J.», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 29th ed., London, 1936, p. 50.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 45. The literature of the CTS is more explicit; 'the Great War had shown the bankruptcy of the religions derived from Luther'. Cfr. ANON., *The C.T.S. and its Work*, London, 1922, p. 6.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
95. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 46. Cfr. also G.K. CHESTERTON, «Roman Converts», *Dublin Review*, 176:1 (January 1925) 1-2.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
97. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 47.
98. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 48.
99. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 49. Vernon Redwood (1874-1954), the founder of the CEG, was born near Blenheim, New Zealand, and emigrated to Australia at the age of nineteen. He was twice elected to the Queensland Legislature, and in 1910 was Mayor of Toowoomba. He moved in England in 1916. He stood for Parliament at the Bromley by-election 1930. Cfr. «Redwood, Vernon Charles», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 383. Cfr. also News report: «Ex-MLA Dies», *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 17 February 1954, 3; also «Father of the CEG dies», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 19 February 1954, 1.
100. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
101. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 51.
102. The other speakers included Fr Philip Fletcher, George Elliot Anstruther and, naturally, Vernon Redwood. Cfr. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 24 April 1918, Box 2, ACEG.
103. Cfr. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 12 June 1918, Box 2, ACEG.
104. Cfr. J. BYRNE, *Handbook of the Catholic Evidence Guild*, London, 1922, p. 7.
105. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 14.
106. Minutes of *Guild Meetings*, 15 May, 29 May, 5 June, 12 June and 19 June 1918, Box 2, ACEG. Fr Ernest Messenger (1888-1952) was the CEG's first Director of Studies. He became a Catholic in 1908, and a priest in 1914. When he moved away to St Edmund's Ware, Fr Arendzen replaced him at the CEG. Cfr. «Messenger, Rev. Ernest Charles», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, pp. 308-309; cfr. also J. PEARCE, *Literary Converts*, London, 1999, p. 51. He wrote at least ten books, including E.C. MESSENGER, *Evolution and Theology. The Problem of Man's Origin*, London, 1931; New York, 1932.
107. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 58.
108. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 11 November 1919, Box 2, ACEG.
109. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 15 December 1920, Box 3, ACEG.
110. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 24 July 1918, Box 2, ACEG.
111. Cfr. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 83.
112. These test lectures are recorded in the Minutes of the *Guild Meetings* of these first years, from March 1919 onwards. Maisie Ward was of the opinion that this 'examination' was 'at first very general and lamentably easy'. Cfr. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 83.

113. Cfr. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 31 October 1931, Box 3, ACEG. The suggestion was Maisie Ward's.
114. F.J. SHEED, *The Catholic Evidence Guild*, London, 1926, p. 11, nt. 2. For a detailed explanation see F.J. SHEED, «The Chairman's Licence», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 13 (July 1922) 194-195.
115. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 61. For corroboration of the date of the first public lecture, cfr. also *Catholic Evidence Guild. Constitutions, Rules and Counsels. With report of First Annual Conference and Preface by His Eminence Cardinal Bourne*, London, 1918, p. 4; also BYRNE, *Handbook*, p. 7.
116. *Catholic Evidence Guild. Constitutions, Rules and Counsels. With report of First Annual Conference and Preface by His Eminence Cardinal Bourne*, London, 1918, p. 4.
117. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 52.
118. Cfr. «Fourth Annual Report», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 303.
119. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 21 July 1920, Box 2, ACEG.
120. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 20 October 1920, Box 2, ACEG.
121. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, pp. 70-73.
122. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
123. These figures are a monthly average of the weekly numbers around the year end recorded in the Minutes of the *Guild* meetings, in Boxes 2 and 3 of the archives. They are slightly lower than the numbers recorded by Browne, who cites a figure of 52 in September 1918, rising to 160 by September 1919. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, pp. 61; 63. The difference is merely seasonal.
124. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 58.
125. Cfr. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 5 May 1920, Box 2, ACEG. The Archbishop of Wellington, who was Vernon Redwood's uncle, addressed the inaugural meeting in the Hut and gave his Episcopal blessing.
126. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 58.
127. F. LEONARD, *Fools for Christ's Sake*, Plawsworth 2000, p. 37. This book, written by a veteran speaker with the *CEG* in Sunderland, is a 'brief account, rather than a history, of the *Guild*', and 'not minutely researched'. Largely nostalgic in tone, it is valuable for its depiction of life in the *CEG*, its descriptions of many individual speakers, and especially for the information it contains about the *Guilds* outside London.
128. Cfr. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 30 August 1920, Box 2, ACEG. Cfr. also BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, pp. 58; 81; and «Fourth Annual Report», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 303.
129. «Fourth Annual Report», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 302. Cfr. also BYRNE, *Handbook*, p. 7; the constitution itself is reproduced on pp. 21-36 of the publication.
130. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 59. Of course the results of the election are also evident from the Minutes of the *Guild*.
131. Maisie Ward had joined the *Guild* in its first year, and at that stage had been on the council for two years, since December 1918 (see nt. 207). She was the daughter of the editor of the *Dublin Review*, Wilfrid Ward, who was himself the son of the prominent Oxford convert and writer W.G. Ward. In 1926 she married Frank Sheed. Her books include *Gilbert Keith Chesterton* (1944) and *Unfinished Business* (1964). She edited the *Catholic Evidence Training Outlines* (1925). Cfr. «Sheed, Mrs Frank; Maisie», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 413.
132. BYRNE, *Handbook*, p. 10.
133. *Ibid.*, p. 27. These officers were specified as the Master, Vice-Master, Secretary and Treasurer, the Secretary of the Outdoor Committee, the Chairman of the Practical Training Committee, the Chairman of the Hut and Finance Committee, the Director of Studies and the Clerical Secretary. The last two were priests.

134. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 28.
135. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
136. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 31.
137. «Fourth Annual Report», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 302. Cfr., also BYRNE, *Handbook*, p. 30.
138. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 82.
139. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
140. Vincent McNabb O.P. (1868-1943) was a famous preacher, and author of at least 35 books, not including CTS booklets and articles in journals. He is best remembered today for his fierce advocacy of Distributism, the social philosophy also advocated by Belloc and the Chesterton brothers; he was more radical than any of them. Cfr. J.L. BENVENISTI, «Father Vincent McNabb, O.P.», in *Great Catholics*, C. WILLIAMSON (ed.), London, 1939, pp. 504-513.
141. Cfr. «C.E.G. Supplement», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 300.
142. BYRNE, *Handbook*, p. 7.
143. SYMONS, «Our Work and its Origin», 217.
144. Cfr. «C.E.G. Supplement», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (September 1921) 216.
145. SYMONS, «Our Work and its Origin», 217.
146. Cfr. «Fourth Annual Report», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 303.
147. *Ibid.*, 302.
148. *Ibidem.*
149. *Ibid.*, 303.
150. *Ibidem.*
151. *Ibidem.*
152. BYRNE, *Handbook*, p. 7. For the lecture outlines, *ibid.*, pp. 47-74.
153. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 4 April 1923, Box 3, ACEG.
154. Minutes of Council meeting, 3 May 1923, Box 3, ACEG.
155. Cfr. for example, the Report appended to Minutes of Council Meeting, 4 April 1924, Box 3, ACEG. The report gives statistics for the period 29 December 1923 to 22 February 1924; figures are given for each of the eight weeks.
156. Cfr. BYRNE, *Handbook*, pp. 13; 21; 23.
157. Cfr. *Handbook of the Catholic Evidence Guild or Guild of Diocesan Catechists in Birmingham*, 1922, p. 3. The text is dated 22 October 1921, and reads: 'The members of the *Catholic Evidence Guild* are doing a work worthy of the highest praise. We rejoice, therefore, at the fruits already reaped through their zeal, we encourage them to persevere in it, and that their Apostolate may attain ever greater and more widespread triumphs. We strengthen them with the Apostolic Benediction'.
158. SHEED, *The Catholic Evidence Guild*, p. 27.
159. Cfr. «Redwood, Vernon Charles», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 383.
160. The quotations are from the obituary of Vernon Redwood, by John Seymour Jonas, in the 26th *Inter-Guild Conference* booklet: *Catholic Evidence Guild. 26th Inter-Guild Conference, Leeds 1954*, Leeds 1954, 32.
161. See the aforementioned biography, S. WINES, *Mark Symons*, London, 1937. Several of Symon's paintings are on display in Reading Museum.
162. B. SEWELL, «An Outstanding Lay Apostle», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 14 November 1958, 7.
163. Cfr. «Jonas, John Seymour», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 229. Cfr. also «Catholic Profiles. John Seymour Jonas», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 14 November 1947, 4. He appears as 'Jack Jonas' in the memoirs of Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward.
164. Cfr. F.J. SHEED, *The Church and I*, London, 1975, p. 42. Cfr. also WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 87. Jonas was 'miraculous as a speaker'.

165. Cfr. «Burns, Alderman Maurice Walter», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 54. Cfr. also «Catholic Profiles. Maurice Burns», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 13 June 1947, 4.
166. Cfr. F.J. SHEED, *Sidelights on the Catholic Revival*, London, 1941, p. 182. The book is A. CURTAYNE, *Saint Catherine of Siena*, London, 1929.
167. Cfr. «Burns, Thomas Ferrier», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 55.
168. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 119.
169. Cfr. «Hewins, Maurice Gravenor», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 207.
170. According to Maisie Ward his father was *founder* of the LSE, but that appears to be inaccurate. Cfr. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 102.
171. Cfr. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 99. Maisie Ward describes him as 'the most distinguished scholar the Guild ever had'. Cfr. also «University Scholarships and Prizes», *The Oxford Magazine*, 33 (1914) 22; 274.
172. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
173. Cfr. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 46. Sheed said that Cozens helped him 'to see the value of precision'. Cfr. also WARD, *Unfinished Business*, pp. 190-191.
174. The book is M.L. COZENS, *A Handbook of Heresies*, London, 1928. It has been described as 'probably the best small-compass account of departures from the Faith', cfr. K. KEATING, *Catholicism and Fundamentalism. The Attack on 'Romanism' by 'Bible Christians'*, San Francisco, 1988, p. 276.
175. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 188. Cfr. also LEONARD, *Fools for Christ's Sake*, p. 88. Ward does not identify Flaxman by name, but Leonard does.
176. LEONARD, *Fools for Christ's Sake*, p. 88.
177. Cfr. F.J. SHEED, «Gathering of the Eloquent», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 5 February 1960, 7.
178. E.A. SIDERMAN, *A Saint in Hyde Park*, London, 1950, p. 9.
179. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 82.
180. James Britten expressed a similar idea, with respect to the CTS: 'The Society, as it now exists, was brought into being by men almost entirely unknown, save in their own small circles'. J. BRITTEN, «The Catholic Truth Society», *Dublin Review*, 17:2 (April 1887) 401.
181. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 46.
182. D. CAMPBELL, «The Catholic Evidence Guild. Towards a History of the Laity», *Heythrop Journal* (London), 30 (1989) 314. Literature associated with the *Guild* demonstrates that at least some speakers were experts. Cfr. M. WARD, *Catholic Evidence Training Outlines*, London, 1925 and subsequent editions of the same. Cfr. also F.J. SHEED, *Theology and Sanity*, London, 1947.
183. F.J. SHEED, *Theology and Sanity*, London, ¹1978, Preface to the Revised Edition, pp. 9-10. 'Every paragraph had been tried out on forty or fifty outdoor audiences before I got it down on paper (...) The crowd was truly co-author of the book; not a sentence that has not been reshaped by them'.
184. F.J. SHEED, *Faith Comes by Hearing*, London, ²1980, pp. 6-7.
185. According to the Minutes the 'final draft of the Specialised Study Scheme' was adopted in November 1919, cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 28 November 1919, Box 2, ACEG. The *Advice* was published in *The Catholic Gazette* when the *CEG Supplement* was started up two years later. Cfr. «Advice for Intending Speakers», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (October 1921) 246-247.
186. Cfr. BYRNE, *Handbook*, pp. 47-53. For the lecture outlines, *ibid.*, pp. 53-74.
187. «Advice for Intending Speakers», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (October 1921) 246. Also cfr. BYRNE, *Handbook*, pp. 48-49.
188. *Ibid.*, 247. Also cfr. BYRNE, *Handbook*, pp. 50-52.

189. *Ibid.*, 247. Also cfr. BYRNE, *Handbook*, p. 53.
190. The full account is to be found in BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, pp. 101-104.
191. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 102, nt. Several refusals are recorded in the CEG archives. Cfr. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 24 November 1925, Box 4, ACEG, showing the refusal of a challenge from a Protestant Alliance speaker: the Cardinal was said to be 'of the opinion that debates did not do any good'. Cfr. also Minutes of Executive Meeting, 26 January 1926, Box 4, ACEG, showing the refusal of a challenge from a 'Communist Party (anti-parliamentary)' speaker, and Minutes of Executive Meeting, 25 February 1930, Box 4, ACEG, when the *Guild* turned down a request for a speaker for a debate on Divorce Law reform.
192. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
193. *Ibid.*, p. 102
194. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.
195. Browne's book received its *Imprimatur* in September 1921. Frank Sheed was first co-opted onto the CEG Executive two months later, as Assistant Secretary. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 28 November 1921, Box 3, ACEG.
196. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 104.
197. *Church Times*, as reported in «Notes from Westminster», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 13 (April 1922) 109.
198. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 82. Maisie Ward recounts the story of how Redwood 'standing on the platform, looking down', confronted an aggressive woman heckler: 'My dear friends', he began, spreading out his arms, 'We love you, every one. We are not out here to attack any man's religion, but Protestantism never saved a cat... Stop cackling, you old hen'.
199. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 79.
200. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 92. Cfr. also SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 45. Sheed describes how a heckler called Byrne a liar. 'You're another', he answered, 'now let's get back to something serious'. And responding to a heckler who had been quoting a rash statement by a well-known priest, Byrne responded: 'There's nothing in the Code of Canon Law against ordaining fools'. The priest was the late Cardinal's younger brother, Fr Bernard Vaughan, S.J. (1847-1922).
201. These 'conflicts' have been discussed before. Cfr., for instance, Debra Campbell's very helpful essay, D. CAMPBELL, «The Catholic Evidence Guild. Towards a History of the Laity», *Heythrop Journal* (London), 30 (1989) 306-324, and other articles by the same author.
202. Cfr. Minutes of *Guild* Meeting, 8 May 1918, Box 2, ACEG.
203. Cfr. Minutes of *Guild* Meeting, 22 May 1918, Box 2, ACEG. Cfr. also WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 81.
204. Cfr. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 100. Cfr. also CAMPBELL, «The Catholic Evidence Guild», 318.
205. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 100. Symptomatic of the difficulty faced by Maisie Ward's anti-feminist opponents, was the fact that they had to resort to subterfuge. They persuaded another woman to stand against her. The Minutes show no signs of the attempt.
206. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 84. Other examples exist from the very earliest years; As the Westminster *Guild's* first Minutes book, running from 24 April 1918 to 26 October 1920, shows, places on the Council went to a Mrs Stuart Anderson and a Miss Sproston, while Maisie Ward's own mother was, like her, a CEG lecturer.
207. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 6 December 1918, Box 2, ACEG, which show that Maisie Ward was newly on the Council.
208. Cfr. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 83. As we have seen, there were in fact courses of connected lectures from the earliest months; however, they were not integrated into an all-encompassing whole. Maisie Ward did not consider the test lectures, which ran from early 1919, as constituting a rigorous examination system.

209. Symons and Byrne had been elected to the first Council, in June 1918, cfr. Minutes of *Guild Meeting*, 12 June 1918, Box 2, ACEG. Louisa Cozens came onto it four months later, cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 4 October 1918, Box 2, ACEG.
210. Cfr. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 83.
211. Redwood had been in contact with the *Ransomers* before starting up the CEG, cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 50.
212. CAMPBELL, «The Catholic Evidence Guild», 317. Cfr. also *Catholic Evidence Guild. 26th Inter-Guild Conference, Leeds 1954*, Leeds 1954, 31-32.
213. Cfr. *ibid.*, 317; and LEONARD, *Fools for Christ's Sake*, p. 36-37.
214. Cfr. for example BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, pp. 45-48; and BYRNE, *Handbook*, pp. 5-14. Finally, cfr. also «Fourth Annual Report», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 302-303, written by Maisie Ward.
215. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 59.
216. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 16 September 1920, Box 2, ACEG. Maisie Ward was one of the members present at this unanimous meeting.
217. Cfr. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 59.
218. Cfr. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 54. Sheed concedes that in the first days the CEG speakers 'had not a notion of the intellectual labour' they were 'letting [themselves] in for'.
219. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 76.
220. Cfr. «Fourth Annual Report», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 302. The Minutes show that the process was begun on 31st October 1919, when a sub-committee was appointed 'to revise the constitution'. On 1st June 1920 the CEG Council moved to forward the revised constitution 'to the President' – i.e., the Cardinal – for his approval. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meetings, 31 October 1919 and 1 June 1920, Box 2, ACEG.
221. Cfr. «Redwood, Vernon Charles», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 383. He was one of the co-founders of the *Fellowship*.
222. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 79.
223. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 90.
224. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 90.
225. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 90.
226. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
227. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 91.
228. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 27 November 1923, and Council Meeting, 28 November 1923, Box 3, ACEG.
229. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 9 January 1924, Box 3, ACEG. A copy of the letter, which bears the same date, is attached to the Minutes.
230. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 9 January 1924, Box 3, ACEG.
231. Cfr. The minutes probably refer to the *Fellowship* when they state that 'Coldwell had run a meeting concurrently with ours at Highbury', cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 5 July 1922, Box 3, ACEG.
232. Cfr. «Lecturer's Libel Suit. Action Against Publishers of Catholic Paper», *The Glasgow Herald*, 15 January 1926, 6. The jury 'gave a verdict for the plaintiff, assessing the damages at £500'.
233. Cfr. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 24 June 1924, Box 3, ACEG.
234. Cfr. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 79.
235. According to Francis Leonard's brief account of the *Guild*, long after his departure Redwood 'kept a tenuous contact' with the CEG. In his old age he 'would turn up at a *Guild* annual conference and sit in the audience without, it seems, any bitterness'. Cfr. LEONARD, *Fools for Christ's Sake*, p. 37.
236. Minutes of Council Meetings 'for the purpose of drawing up precepts and counsels to be embodied in the constitution', 8 August and 30 August 1918, Box 1, ACEG.
237. BYRNE, *Handbook*, p. 34.

238. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
239. Cfr. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 29 May 1923, Box 2, ACEG. The resolution reads: 'That if the *Guild of Ransom* proposes to use their platforms for discussion of social as well as apologetic subjects, accordingly it would be impossible to send speakers to their meetings'. The eventuality did not arise.
240. Cfr. CAMPBELL, «The Catholic Evidence Guild», 318. Cardinal Bourne pronounced against the General Strike, whereas Fr Vincent McNabb held a different opinion.
241. Cfr. Minutes of Special Council Meeting, 2 July 1926, Box 4, ACEG. This meeting was attended by 21 people. Redwood's proposal was supported by one council member – a former member of the *Barrow Brigade* called Moseley – and opposed by seven others, including Messrs Sheed, Squire, Burns and Maisie Ward. The proposal was defeated by sixteen votes to two (the two were presumably Redwood and Moseley). Three members appear to have abstained. Louisa Cozens appears on the list of those present. She is known to have been 'shattered by the Cardinal's pronouncements' against the General Strike, but was not in favour of introducing the discussion of social questions from the *Guild's* platform. Cfr. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, pp. 189-191. Cfr. also CAMPBELL, «The Catholic Evidence Guild», 318.
242. Notes of Maisie Ward's speech, Minutes of Special Council Meeting, 2 July 1926, Box 4, ACEG.
243. Notes of Frank Sheed's speech, Minutes of Special Council Meeting, 2 July 1926, Box 4, ACEG.
244. Notes of Maurice Burn's speech, Minutes of Special Council Meeting, 2 July 1926, Box 4, ACEG.
245. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 193. In her autobiography she gives a further 'very strong' reason: 'we were not yet ready with any solutions other than a compromise with, or a toning down of, the theories of men far removed from Christianity': WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 173.
246. Minutes of Executive Meetings, 4 January and 1 March 1927, Box 4, ACEG.
247. Minutes of Council Meeting, 4 July 1928, Box 5, ACEG.
248. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 4 August 1931, Box 5, ACEG.
249. M.W. BURNS and R.J. FLAXMAN, Letters: *The Catholic Herald* (London), 23 August 1940, 2.
250. In this context Maisie Ward wrote: 'our speakers must be taught to teach the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Mystical Body, the supernatural life, and sacraments, the Mass'. The Archbishop of Westminster took the same approach, but 'in the provincial *Guilds* it was different (...) most bishops taking the same line as Westminster, some not'. Whenever a vote was taken, the view of Westminster *Guild* prevailed. Cfr. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, pp. 195-197.
251. SHEED, *The Catholic Evidence Guild*, p. 27.
252. Minutes of *Guild* Meeting, 28 August 1918, Box 1, ACEG.
253. *Catholic Evidence Guild. Constitutions, Rules and Counsels. With report of First Annual Conference and Preface by His Eminence Cardinal Bourne*, London, 1918, p. 12.
254. Minutes of Council Meetings 'for the purpose of drawing up precepts and counsels to be embodied in the constitution', 8 August and 30 August 1918, Box 1, ACEG. The acronym 'KBS' stands for the *Knights of the Blessed Sacrament*.
255. BYRNE, *Handbook*, pp. 21-22.
256. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
257. Cfr. «Fourth Annual Report», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 303.
258. Cfr. Minutes of *Guild* Meeting, 8 December 1920, Box 1, ACEG.
259. BYRNE, *Handbook*, p. 32.
260. Cfr. Minutes of *Guild* Meeting, 8 July 1925, Box 4, ACEG.
261. SHEED, *The Catholic Evidence Guild*, p. 27. For examples of other 'adoration intentions', cfr. Minutes of Council Meetings, 7 January 1925, 26 May 1926 and 5 March 1930, Box 4, ACEG.

262. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
263. Cfr. «Fourth Annual Report», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 303. Cfr. also Minutes of Executive Meeting, 27 July 1926, Box 4, ACEG. The Convent building was sold in 1999, and has since been replaced by private housing.
264. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 27 February 1923, Box 3, ACEG.
265. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 3 May 1923, Box 3, ACEG.
266. Cuthbert Butler (1858-1934) was the second abbot of Downside (1906-1922), and an author. Cfr. C. BUTLER, *Benedictine Monachism*, London, 1919; and *Western Mysticism*, London, 1922.
267. Report appended to Minutes of Council Meeting, 6 May 1924, Box 3, ACEG.
268. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 25 April 1933, Box 5, ACEG. 'The Holy Week mission exceeded anything so far done (...) Good Friday crowds were larger than ever & very respectful'.
269. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 94.
270. *Ibid.*, p. 94. For a detailed eyewitness description of these events, cfr. SIDERMAN, *A Saint in Hyde Park*, pp. 142-147.
271. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 7 May 1930, Box 5, ACEG. 'Stations of the Cross were held for the first time at Watford' – by Fr D'Arcy, S.J. – 'where a crowd remained though torrential rain fell', as well as at Edmonton, Tower Hill, Tollington Park, Hammersmith and at Pimlico.
272. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 58.
273. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
274. Cfr. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 1 July 1930, Box 5, ACEG. The officialdom in this case was the Hampstead Police.
275. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 6 May 1931, Box 5, ACEG. The reason for abandoning a pitch was cited as 'road excavations'.
276. Minutes of Council Meeting, 7 May 1930, Box 5, ACEG.
277. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 6 May 1931, Box 5, ACEG. Two pitches, where Stations of the Cross was due to be made on Good Friday, were reported as having been 'made impossible by rain'.
278. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meetings, 5 March and 7 May 1930, Boxes 4 and 5, ACEG. The 'average number' of active speakers having 'dropped to 54', it is reported in the second meeting as having 'shown an increase with the better weather'.
279. Cfr. Report appended to Minutes of Council Meeting, 4 March 1924. The report shows that in the first eight weeks of 1924, there were 25 meetings per week and 60 speeches per week throughout Westminster archdiocese – about three quarters of the expected level of activity.
280. Cfr. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 26 February 1929, Box 4, ACEG. Notwithstanding the wintry weather and illness – 'the total number of speeches made during the last three months was on the same scale as for the whole of last year'.
281. Cfr. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 49.
282. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 47.
283. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 50-53 especially.
284. Minutes of Council Meeting, 4 March 1925, Box 4, ACEG.
285. Cfr. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 52.
286. *Ibid.*, p. 50. Maisie Ward names the Protestant Alliance as one of these groups. Cfr. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 85.
287. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 85.
288. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 51. Cfr. also WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 86: 'Pennies were given by our hecklers to little boys who, on occasion, ran pins into our ankles or tied our shoelaces to the sides of the platform'.
289. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 51. One of Sheed's lectures was spoiled by an old man – 'over eighty' – with a 'non-stop', 'bellowing voice'.

290. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
291. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
292. «Fourth Annual Report», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 12 (December 1921) 303.
293. The Kensitites were the followers of John Kensit, the founder of the *Protestant Truth Society*. For more on this, cfr. for example D.G. PAZ, *Popular anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England*, Stanford 1992, p. 151.
294. BROWNE, *The Catholic Evidence Movement*, p. 52. The provincial *Guilds* also encountered opposition: the CEG platform on the sands at Wallasey was smashed one Sunday – together with its crucifix – by ‘a well organized body of Orangemen from Liverpool’. Cfr. LEONARD, *Fools for Christ’s Sake*, p. 84.
295. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 3 March 1926, Box 4, ACEG.
296. Cfr. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 30 March 1926, Box 4, ACEG.
297. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 5 March 1930, Box 4, ACEG. Cfr. also WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 86: ‘A drunk would shake the platform violently. One of our speakers was shaken off at Wood Green (...)’.
298. Cfr. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 25 August 1931, Box 5, ACEG. ‘Bumpus Corner’ could refer to the junction of Oxford Street and Marylebone Lane, outside the then famous *Bumpus Bookshop*.
299. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 2 July 1932, Box 5, ACEG. The Minutes reported a ‘Shortage of new speakers at Victoria Park and Whitechapel, which were difficult pitches’.
300. «Father of the CEG dies», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 19 February 1954, 1. The article is an obituary of Vernon Redwood.
301. Cfr. J. O’KEEFE, «The Decline of Soap-box Catholicism», *The Catholic Herald* (London), 2 May 1969, 4. Cfr. also *Catholic Evidence Guild. 26th Inter-Guild Conference, Leeds 1954*, Leeds 1954, 32.
302. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 94. The heckler used to shout, ‘You’re going to Hell, McNabb, and you know it’. On that occasion he evidently went too far.
303. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 28 August 1928, Box 4, ACEG.
304. Minutes of Council Meeting, 5 March 1930, Box 4, ACEG.
305. *Ibidem*.
306. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 1 July 1930, Box 5, ACEG.
307. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 29 July 1930, Box 5, ACEG.
308. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 29 July 1930, Box 5, ACEG.
309. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 298. The book is E.A. SIDERMAN, *A Saint in Hyde Park*, London, 1950.
310. SIDERMAN, *A Saint in Hyde Park*, Introduction, p. 5. The introduction was written by Frank Sheed.
311. SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 298.
312. Siderman knew other CEG members; at least one Master of the *Guild*, Ronald Flaxman, counted him as an ‘old friend and adversary’, cfr. SIDERMAN, *A Saint in Hyde Park*, p. 145.
313. WARD, *Unfinished Business*, p. 187.
314. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
315. *Ibid.*, p. 187. The unnamed speaker was Ronald Flaxman, as stated above. Cfr. also SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 53.
316. *Ibid.*, p. 188. Cfr. also SHEED, *The Church and I*, p. 53.
317. *Ibidem*.
318. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
319. *Ibidem*.
320. *Ibidem*.
321. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
322. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

323. Frank Sheed (1897-1981), writer and publisher, six times Master of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*, and its founder in Australia and the USA, was born in Sydney, Australia, and attended the Sydney University Law School, graduating with distinction. He moved to England in 1920. In 1926 he married the writer Maisie Ward, and founded the publishing house of Sheed and Ward. In he founded Sheed and Ward Inc. of New York. His books include *A Map of Life* (1933), *Theology and Sanity* (1947), *Theology for Beginners* (1958), *To Know Christ Jesus* (1962) and *The Church and I* (1975). Together with Maisie Ward he compiled the *Catholic Evidence Training Outlines* (1934). Cfr. «Sheed, Francis J.», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 413.
324. Cfr. SHEED, *The Church and I*, pp. 39-40.
325. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 41.
326. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 42.
327. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 45.
328. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
329. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 41.
330. Cfr. ANSTRUTHER and HALLETT, *Catholic Truth Society. The First Fifty Years*, pp. 15-16. Cfr. also SHEED, *The Church and I*, pp. 78-82.
331. Cfr. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 28 November 1921, Box 2, ACEG.
332. Cfr. «Westminster Notes», *The Catholic Gazette* (London), 13 (November 1922) 333. The election was on 3 November 1922. The Minutes of subsequent meetings show that Sheed was Master from then until October 1924 – as do other sources, cfr. «Sheed, Francis J.», in *The Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, p. 413.
333. Cfr. BYRNE, *Handbook*, p. 7.
334. Sheed's 'energies' have also been pinpointed as one of the factors behind the expansion of the CTS at this time. Cfr. ANSTRUTHER and HALLETT, *Catholic Truth Society. The First Fifty Years*, pp. 13-16.
335. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 2 July 1924, Box 3, ACEG. The account records the remarks of one of the members attending the meeting, who commented on 'the able manner' in which Sheed had 'carried out his office & the amount of time he had dedicated to the *Guild*'.
336. SHEED, *The Catholic Evidence Guild*, p. 28.
337. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
338. The first edition is: M. WARD, *Catholic Evidence Training Outlines*, London, 1925; this edition was published by the CTS.
339. Cfr. BYRNE, *Handbook*, pp. 53-74.
340. M. WARD and F.J. SHEED, *Catholic Evidence Training Outlines*, London, ³1934, note to third edition.
341. Cfr. SHEED, *Faith Comes by Hearing*, p. 5.
342. SHEED, *Theology and Sanity*, Preface to the Revised Edition, p. 13.
343. Cfr. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 28 November 1921, Box 2, ACEG. A proposal was agreed – proposed by Frank Sheed and seconded by Maisie Ward – to give more discretion to squad leaders 'to prevent members of their squad from speaking' on any subject – even if they had passed their test on it – if their platform work proved that they were not ready for it. Sheed, be it noted, was attending his first Executive Meeting.
344. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 3 May 1923, Box 2, ACEG. It was resolved that 'no licence shall be issued until the person has passed their second test, it being understood that no speaker shall go up for the second test without the permission of the squad leader. Appeal when necessary must be made to the Outdoor Committee'.
345. Cfr. Minutes of Council Meeting, 2 March 1927, Box 4, ACEG. It was resolved, 1) 'That any holder of a Chairman's licence who shall not have taken a test for a year shall be recommended for his chairman's licence' – which implies taking the test again – and 2) 'All junior members must take at least one test per year'. Cfr. also WARD and SHEED, *Catholic Evidence Training Outlines*, p. 36.

- 346. SHEED, *The Catholic Evidence Guild*, p. 3.
- 347. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 348. Cfr. SHEED, *The Church and I*, pp. 85-86.
- 349. Minutes of Council Meeting, 8 September 1926, Box 4, ACEG. This was the first meeting to be held in the new headquarters.
- 350. All these terms of office are evident from the minutes of the *Catholic Evidence Guild*, and in most cases from the relevant entry in the *Catholic Who's Who*, 35th ed., London, 1952, which was the first edition published after World War II.
- 351. Minutes of Executive Meeting, 1 November 1938, Box 5, ACEG.
- 352. Cfr. Minutes of Emergency Executive Meeting, 12 September 1939, Box 5, ACEG.

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